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JANUARY 23, 1995 • $2.95

THE NEW REPUBLIC

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THE NEW REPUBLIC

A Weekly Journal of Opinion

JANUARY 23, 1995

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CORRESPONDENCE

Lost in Brentwood

To the editors:

What's this about a "certain blankness in the eyes you meet on the street" in Brentwood ("Los Angeles 90049," December 12, 1994)? Douglas Coupland's explanation for this alleged vacuity is absurd. He writes without a hint of irony or humor, "Suddenly, around ten years ago, with the deluge of electronic and information media, [the] stencils within which we trace our lives began to vanish.... It became possible to be alive yet have no religion, no family connections, no ideology, no sense of class location, no politics and no sense of history."

Nobody who was alive ten years ago would say that these "stencils" have suddenly vanished. Were there no dysfunctional families eleven years ago? Who's living without ideology today? What hermit is unaware of his class stratum? And who but the criminally self-absorbed have no political or historical beliefs? Even if Coupland believes history began ten years ago, he believes something.

Coupland's narrative about his "denarrated" existence is a projection of his angst onto Brentwood. Human history is full of advances that people were slow to comprehend, and it is also full of people with half-baked theories and cheesy neologisms who think that their angst is special.

DANIEL DONOVAN
New York, New York

To the editors:

I expected more than gossip from your cover story on my home town. Brentwood is not without its history (pre-O. J.), and there are certainly a few families, including mine, who have lived there over several generations. In the '30s and '40s, Brentwood was home to a large Austro-German émigré enclave that included Thomas Mann, Theodor Adorno, Bertolt Brecht, Max Reinhardt, Arnold Schoenberg (my grandfather) and, indeed, Gina Kaus (grandmother of TNR's own Mickey Kaus).

Thomas Mann spent one summer on the now-famous North Rockingham, just a few blocks up the street from the house my grandfather bought in 1936, where my family still lives. Indeed, long before O. J., Rockingham appeared on "star maps" as the location of the childhood home of Shirley Temple. But at that time, before the freeways made Brentwood accessible, many of the large lots in Brentwood Park were used as seasonal flower gardens by downtown flower merchants.

Now these lots are filled by monster houses, built primarily by non-Californians eager to make their mark on what they wrongly presume is virgin territory. Your correspondent fell into the same trap as these newcomers and took for granted the lack of history in Brentwood. Wouldn't it spoil the days of the new Brentwoodians sipping coffee at Starbucks on San Vicente to learn that Brentwood existed even before they arrived?

E. RANDOL SCHOENBERG
Los Angeles, California, 90049

To the editors:

Memphis. Zip code: 38116. Elvis Presley Boulevard to the Graceland Mall. Car dealerships. Budget motels. Fat white people. They don't exercise. Why? Fried banana and peanut butter sandwiches. The King. Lisa Marie. "We're gonna have a clambake." Prozac? No thanks.

Overheard:
"Douglas Coupland's lame."
"Who?"

KIERON SWAINE
Memphis, Tennessee

Long night's orgy

To the editors:

I have no interest in the kind of hypocrisy attendant to Newt Gingrich's call for family values after an allegedly unseemly divorce, or for that matter President Clinton's. Unfortunately, this is the type of hypocrisy that consumes Robert Wright ("The Gay Divorcé," TRB, December 19, 1994). Therein lies his misreading of the American public's foul mood.

November's obliteration was born of hypocrisy such as: read my lips, no new taxes/tax increase; gays in the military by a stroke of the pen/don't ask, don't tell; Haiti and China policies immoral/Haiti and China policies moral. Wright asks a great deal in demanding that his elected officials live good clean lives if they are going to advocate the same. I'm less particular. Gingrich is welcome to preach after a long night's orgy so long as he does half of what he has promised.

JEFFREY W. LARROCA
Arlington, Virginia

To the editors:

If Robert Wright is correct then I know how to shore up family values. Wright argues that "men are by nature more polygamous than women," and "the polygamous impulse seems to grow stronger when men acquire status or power." If so, it is obvious we should structure society

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Voters in 22 states have imposed term limits on their congressional representatives. Would term limits improve government? Would they be constitutional? *The Politics and Law of Term Limits* presents both sides of those questions and lets the reader decide.

Contributors include syndicated columnist **George F. Will**, League of Women Voters president **Becky Cain**, U.S. Term Limit executive director **Paul Jacob**, **Thomas E. Mann** of the Brookings Institution, constitutional scholar **Ronald D. Rotunda**, former White House counsel **Lloyd Cutler**, and attorney **John G. Kester**, who defended term limits this fall before the Supreme Court.

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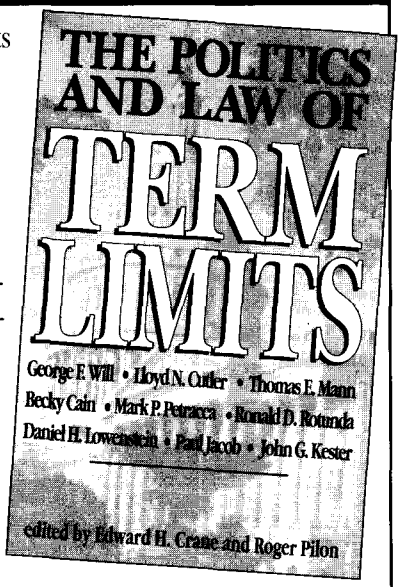
THE POLITICS AND LAW OF
TERM LIMITS
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Becky Cain • Mark P. Petracca • Ronald D. Rotunda
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so that women alone have power and status, and men are dependent. That way, women's natures will ensure that they support their families. Men will stay at home, where they will be happy since their degraded condition will dampen their biological impulses.

I'm all for hoisting Newt Gingrich with his own petard, but I think we can do it with reason. What happened to the ideal of equality?

GLENDA E. GILMORE
Charlotte, North Carolina

Doubting Thomas

To the editors:

Evidence professors in law school teach that hearsay is an out-of-court statement offered to prove the truth of the matter asserted. This definition has been refined by the Anita F. Hill contingent, as reported by Jeffrey Rosen in "Confirmations" (December 19, 1994). A statement by one third party to another remains hearsay. However, a statement by the complainant (even ten years later) to a third party that is repeated by the third party becomes *corroboration.*

DAVID R. ZUKERMAN
Bronx, New York

To the editors:

In his otherwise excellent review of the two books about Clarence Thomas, Jeffrey Rosen could also have noted the *U.S.* v. *Jacobson* decision, from Thomas's first term on the Court. The case concerned a Nebraska school bus driver who finally capitulated to two years of solicitation by a Postal Service kiddie-porn sting operation. The Court ruled, in a 5-4 decision, that Jacobson was unconstitutionally entrapped.

Thomas's vote may well have been the deciding one. Perhaps only he could have understood the appeal of pornography well enough to have let Jacobson off.

DANIEL CASE
Clarence, New York

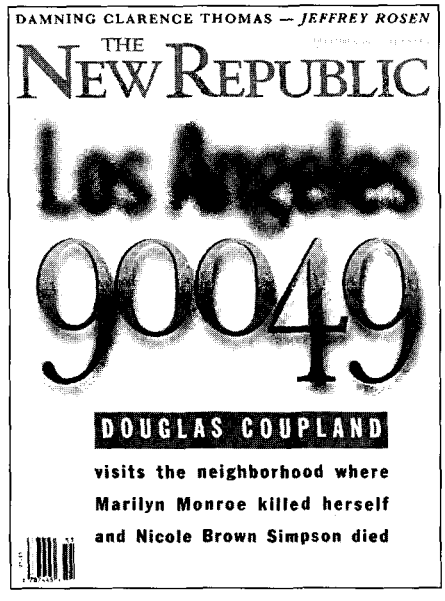
Full spectrum

To the editors:

In his December 19, 1994, article "Color T.V.," Jonathan Rauch leaves out many of the most important facts about the inclusion of small businesses, women and minorities in the Federal Communications Commission spectrum-license auctions.

The various licensing auctions are for many different wireless communications businesses such as mobile telephones. Women and minorities own about 2 percent of these businesses, although they account for 64 percent of the population. All studies agree that small businesses, women and minorities have serious difficulties obtaining capital. Even when capital is available, the cost is higher than the capital available to established communications firms.

The FCC sets aside certain licenses for small businesses, including but not limited to small businesses owned by women and minorities. In effect we have not let big businesses bid on all the licenses. In addition, we extended women and minorities bidding credits and installment payment plans. Our purpose was to increase the power of small business, women and minorities to attract investors. More women and minorities have obtained business opportunities under these guidelines than under all previous licensing techniques.



We have not guaranteed any bidder a certainty of winning at auction, or any auction winner a certainty of prevailing in communications markets. Nor have we bound ourselves to achieve any particular results in the auctions for women or minorities. What we have done, so far, is achieve a greater opportunity for these groups to participate.

REED E. HUNDT
Chairman, Federal Communications Commission
Washington, D.C.

Let Saigons be bygones

To the editors:

In the December 19, 1994, editorial "A Civil War," TNR argues with the Bosnian Serb leader, Radovan Karadzić, over his statement that sending "2,000 Marines [and then] 10,000 more to save them is the best way to have another Vietnam." You assert, "We have the power to stop the Serbian advance, not by landing American forces, but by striking a variety of Serbian positions from the air, and by helping the Bosnians to acquire the strength they need for their own defense."

The above argument bears uncanny resemblance to the argument used to justify the Christmas bombing of Hanoi. The bombing would, the argument went, force the North to accept the peace on U.S. terms and save the South. The rest is history. Following your advice, it is not hard to imagine, a few years down the road, the CNN report from Sarajevo, with panic-stricken Alija Izetbegović and other Muslim leaders boarding the last American chopper, while the not-so-close collaborators, who were not so lucky to reserve the seat, are trying to climb the fence around the American Embassy.

SINISA MESAROVIC
Cambridge, Massachusetts

City lights

To the editors:

As a graduate of City College who has not read James Traub's book *City on the Hill,* I was grateful for Nathan Glazer's excellent review and summary ("Unsentimental Education," December 19, 1994). In 1985 I went to the college to recruit engineers. The squalor in the surrounding neighborhood and on campus, along with the persistent assurances by the teaching staff that nothing had changed and that it was the same old CCNY, left me with an impression that even the standards of the engineering school had deteriorated.

I think what the college has done is commendable. But is it the function of an institution of higher learning to teach grammar school subjects? In the end the school's reputation is damaged. I don't agree with Glazer's optimistic conclusion; the outlook for CCNY looks gloomy. It's time for CCNY to act like the great scholarly institution it once was.

HERMAN ROSEN
Harrisburg, Pennsylvania

Gusto

To the editors:

In a review brimming with gusto ("The Restorer of the Real," December 19, 1994), Helen Vendler makes a slight error that should be cleared up. T. S. Eliot spent the academic year 1910-11 in Paris, but was not at that time absconding from the Ph.D. He returned to Harvard in the fall of 1911 to begin graduate work in philosophy. It was not until 1916 that he bagged the philosophy career, at which time he was married and living in England.

LEE OSER
New Haven, Connecticut

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FROM WASHINGTON

The $4 million mind

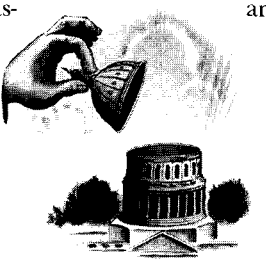
We stand at a crossroads between two diverse futures. O.K. I admit it: the previous sentence isn't original to me. I was looking for an opening line with some oomph, and I lifted this one from the work of one of the most powerful writers of our time: Newt Gingrich. It is the first sentence in his book on America's future.

No, I don't mean the book that a major New York publishing house is willing to spend millions publishing and promoting; that book isn't written yet. I mean *Window of Opportunity*, published in 1984 by "Tom Doherty Associates"—and promoted via a $105,000 publicity budget donated by oil interests, textile interests, real estate interests and so on. But that's another story. This week let's use *Window of Opportunity* as the rare opportunity it is—a chance to glimpse a $4.5 million literary talent in action.

To begin with, there is Gingrich's justly celebrated use of imagery. Consider his description of how "welfare state" liberals wrecked the space program. When he writes that "the vision of a malaise-dominated decaying Western culture smothered the dream of a permanently manned station," we feel as if we can *see* the malaise-dominated decay; and we watch, transfixed, as it (or, strictly speaking, the vision of it) slowly smothers a space station (or, technically, the dream of one). Of course, more than Gingrich's literary flair, it is his penetrating vision of the future that has made him such a sought-after writer. He reports, for example, that the modern economy calls for less and less physical labor, and then builds swiftly from this insight to the prediction that Americans "will increasingly ... release the day's tension by lifting weights, swimming or through contact sports." Newtradamus has spoken.

As Gingrich stresses repeatedly, the path to an "optimistic future" (one of the two diverse futures between which lies the crossroads at which we stand) passes through outer space. If the government had followed through on the 1969 moon landing, he says, then by 1984 we would have had two space stations and a colony on the moon. You might ask: What eventual benefits could justify such massive spending? Gingrich is ready for this question. "A mirror system in space could provide the light equivalent of many full moons so that there would be no need for nighttime lighting of the highways." Indeed, "ambient light covering entire areas could reduce the current danger of criminals lurking in darkness." Also, don't forget "the possible benefits of weightlessness to people currently restricted to wheelchairs." Lending credence to this scenario, Gingrich reports that, if you describe it to paraplegics, they "begin asking questions in an enthusiastic tone."

The principle underlying this last idea—dubbed "compassionate high-tech" by its discoverer, Gingrich—admits to endless application. Since his book came out, there have been breakthroughs in the field of superconductivity. Should we launch a big federal research program? I say yes, and I think Gingrich will agree once he hears my logic. Superconductivity research involves very low temperatures. So on the roof of each laboratory we could build an ice-skating rink for underclass children who would be flown in to an adjoining heliport. "But what if it rains?" Luddite McGoverniks will ask. Each rink would be covered with a geodesic dome, built by local prison inmates who would thus gain valuable job skills.



There is a serious point here somewhere. Gingrich calls himself a "conservative futurist," yet when he gets futuristic he jettisons the conservative aversion to government involvement. Conservatives are supposed to ask, for example, "Mightn't the market work better here than government spending?" But when the government spending is on technology, the only question Gingrich asks is, "Do I think this is cool?" The answer almost invariably is yes. For example, he thinks "home-based information systems using either the telephone or cable" are cool. Thus "we need dozens of government-encouraged and subsidized efforts" to build such systems, so that we'll find out which kind is best.

Actually, since he wrote this, various media and telecom companies have proved willing, without special subsidy, to build expensive, suburb-size systems, installing living-room machines for videotext, multimedia, etc. So far the results can be summarized as follows: this is an excellent way to waste money. The whole notion of choosing a particular "type" of system is losing out to the realization that, if we provide capacious wires and a few industry-wide standards, the market will answer the hardware and software questions that Gingrich would have thrown our tax dollars at.

Witness the "Minitel" example. In the early 1980s the French government decided what kind of on-line text-retrieval machines French homes would have. This did spur the creation of data services—home banking, and so on. But today these antique machines are so glacially slow that the physical infrastructure is stifling the development of new data-intensive on-line services, the kind featuring multimedia effects or even simple graphics. The United States now has gobs more computers and computer networks per capita than France, and its big networks, such as America Online, are invading French turf. Back in 1984 Gingrich said Minitel "may make France the leading information-processing society in the world by the end of the century." Better hurry.

Gingrich also thinks health care technology is cool. Serious students of this subject worry that insurance insulates patients from the cost of technology, thus yielding lots of high-cost, low-benefit use and in turn steering too much of society's resources to the further development of such machinery. But Gingrich wants *more*. In 1984 he wanted more CAT-scan machines, and he wanted the government to provide a $100 million incentive for the development of user-friendly dialysis machines—even though "there are already companies and researchers interested in this problem."

The point here isn't that Gingrich will now waste tons on technology. The current political climate will restrain this tendency. The point is that—in case you hadn't noticed—there is little careful thought underpinning his enthusiasms, nothing solid beneath his unshakable self-assurance and his intense disdain for disagreement. (Did you know that the civil rights protests of the 1960s were a seminal contributor to America's "epidemic of technological abhorrence"?) The man who would orchestrate a paradigm shift in American governance shows no inclination to clearly address this basic question: Is government help required to reach a given social goal? And, lacking such clarity, he is at least as likely to say no when the answer is yes as to say yes when the answer is no. We stand at a crossroads between two diverse futures, and—wouldn't you know it!—our compass is busted. I feel increasingly malaise-dominated.

ROBERT WRIGHT

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THE NEW REPUBLIC

JANUARY 23, 1995

THE CHECHEN ADVENTURE

What follows is a dispatch from the front. "The dignified woman now stood over her son's body, and she dug her nails into her face until it bled, and she wailed incessantly. Sado, taking a pickax and spade, had gone with his relatives to dig a grave for his son.... The wailing of the women and the little children, who cried with their mothers, mingled with the lowing of the hungry cattle for whom there was no food. The bigger children, instead of playing, followed their elders with frightened eyes. The fountain was polluted, evidently on purpose, so that the water could not be used. The mosque was polluted in the same way.... No one spoke of hatred of the Russians. The feeling experienced by all the Chechens, from the youngest to the oldest, was stronger than hate. It was not hatred for they did not regard those Russian dogs as human beings, but it was with such repulsion, disgust and perplexity at the senseless cruelty of these creatures, that the desire to exterminate them—like the desire to exterminate rats, poisonous spiders, or wolves—was as natural an instinct as that of self-preservation." This dispatch is from an old front.

Tolstoy wrote the autobiographical novella, *Hadji Murad*, from 1901 to 1904, near the end of his life. But his experience with doomed Russian obsessions to tame the tribes of the Caucasus went back to 1851 when, at the age of 22, he voluntarily joined a raid on a Chechen village. The next year he entered the army officially and found himself again in combat with the ferocious defenders of Chechnya. What he learned then he wrote out over half a century, in *Sebastopol Sketches* and "The Raid" of the early '50s all the way to his climactic memoiristic fiction, quoted above, from which he hoped the Russians might learn. Clearly Boris Yeltsin has not learned his lesson.

There has been little pretense in Boris Yeltsin's war against the Chechens. Here, for example, is how he exhorted his troops in a New Year's Eve message: "Remember that you are serving Russia, that you defend Russia and the Russians." Gone finally is the lie first contrived for the nineteenth-century liberals of St. Petersburg and Moscow, that Russia was actually a multiethnic state, a great mother with many different children. Russia is for the Russians, *tout court*. Nothing expresses this contempt for others more precisely than the storming of the Chechen capital by the army after the city had been softened up by gunships, cannon and heavy artillery. "We have been told to fire and fire again. There are no other choices," said a brigade commander. Grozny was a free-fire zone. For the moment, however, the tides of war may have shifted. Hundreds of Russian soldiers have been killed, trapped in the Gehenna of their burning tanks.

The Bolsheviks called old Russia the "prisonhouse of nations," suggesting not very subtly that, if they came to power, they'd let the captives go free. But they did nothing of the sort. Instead, Communist rule put other populations under the boot of the Red Army, and that is where they stayed until the Soviet Union evaporated five years ago. The Baltic states seized their independence first; and these were followed by a handful of polities—not unlike Chechnya—deft enough to climb early through their own particular windows of opportunity during the chaotic period spanning Mikhail Gorbachev's gradual decline and Boris Yeltsin's final ascendancy. But these secessions still left dozens of historic people and ethnic groups, some large, some small, more or less where they were when the Romanovs were overthrown in 1917. Yeltsin may be vastly different and vastly preferable to his Communist forebears when it comes to his tolerance for dissent and democracy. But when it comes to true freedom for the varied peoples of the Russian Federation, he is acting disconcertingly like the czars.

The Chechens are only the latest of the various distinct populations that are once more demonstrating that they are no longer willing to be politically indentured to Russia. If they win a measure of real self-government—rather than the Potemkin autonomy they have now—their success will reignite the aspirations of others, from the Tatars in the Caucasus to the Takutians in far-away Siberia. Some are not so distinct and deserve less autonomy; their populations are mixed, their integration into Russia ancient. But this certainly is not the case for break-away Chechnya, an integral territory with an integral inhabitant base of 1 million, a people whom Stalin deported and who subsequently returned and remained unsubdued.

The Russian war against the Chechens has been especially cruel, following, like all wars of this sort, its own barbaric logic: an orphanage was bombed, residential housing, a market, roads of escape. Yeltsin's own civil

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society, his former allies and his own military have come to see the folly of attempting to create a democratic and stable polity with instruments of terror and warfare. The cost of his adventure threatens to undermine the fragile success of his economic reforms. Now, the political danger could be even worse. Yeltsin must ask himself whether his new Russia is an *imperium* or a *societas*. It is a sign of his successs—and his current folly—that the Russian people are now clamoring for the latter.

The Clinton administration's response to the Chechnya ignominy of its Russian ally has been awkward silence. This is no surprise. The cardinal principle of American foreign policy now is that we not upset Yeltsin, even when we might help save him from his own errors. He knows this is so. Which is to say he knows he is free to do mischief, as he has done with Bosnia and with Iraq, without incurring any costs or risks. He has held intervention in Bosnia hostage to his own needs and, in the U.N. Security Council, has protected Saddam Hussein from the consequences of his violations of post-Gulf war undertakings. And he has now moved on to other brutalities. Still, the U.S. will not retaliate; we will not even recriminate. Ours is a Russia First foreign policy, the realization of ideas Strobe Talbott first contemplated as a member of the Yale Russian Chorus.

DRAWING BY JOHN SPRINGS FOR THE NEW REPUBLIC

The fact is that Yeltsin is now desperate to stay in power. His gambits are illuminating. On every front, recently, he has moved in the direction of authoritarianism and toward the "nationalist" camp, which is to say the Russian nationalist camp, around whose ideas both the country's fascists and communists (and its Orthodox Church hierarchy, too) converge. Yeltsin has now been abandoned by the sturdy liberal democrats, whose views on civil society and market economics are most akin to our own.

The general framework of uncritical support is compounded by the personal nexus among many of the players. The American president likes the Russian president. The Russian defense minister, General Pavel Grachev, who has taken personal command of the Chechnya operation, has become a personal pal of John Deutch, Clinton's assistant secretary of defense. More important, Grachev is Yeltsin's pal, perhaps his most trusted pal. If one goes, the other is endangered. In Chechnya, the two are yoked together like oxen in the big muddy.

Can Russia survive if Chechnya is given far greater autonomy or even some form of sovereignty? We think so. There is a vast difference between Russia and the Russian Federation, and it is the Russian Federation that is imperiled. The major argument for intervention is that Yeltsin's loss of a part of the Russian Federation would galvanize his ultra opponents. But the public reaction to Yeltsin's move suggests how weak that ultra position really is in Russia's nascent civil society. By failing so obviously, by showing that imperialism is no longer a viable option, that Russia cannot afford to return to its brutal origins while sustaining its more liberal present, Yeltsin has paradoxically called the ultras' bluff. He should retreat to a more re-laxed position, more or less giving the Chechens what they want; eventually they may even come back into closer contact, like the Ukrainians, as they begin to face the consequences of economic isolation. Yeltsin may have more to lose now by winning than by a graceful retreat.

It is never wise for an American president to tie his own fortunes to those of a foreign politician. And it is particularly unwise when that politician's instincts seem to be worryingly imperialist. Even if the Russians win a bloody victory in Chechnya, Yeltsin will be deprived of the ribbons of military success. Late news, as we write, reports more defections in Moscow and more troubles in Grozny. But whatever happens, there will now be two peoples in the region where East meets West to whose miserable fate Bill Clinton was serenely indifferent. About the fate of the Bosnians he might say that he has no bonds with Radovan Karadzić. No cachet. But Yeltsin owes his political survival and his country—its ability to borrow and buy—to the indulgence of the United States. And so Chechnya is now President Clinton's adventure as well. •

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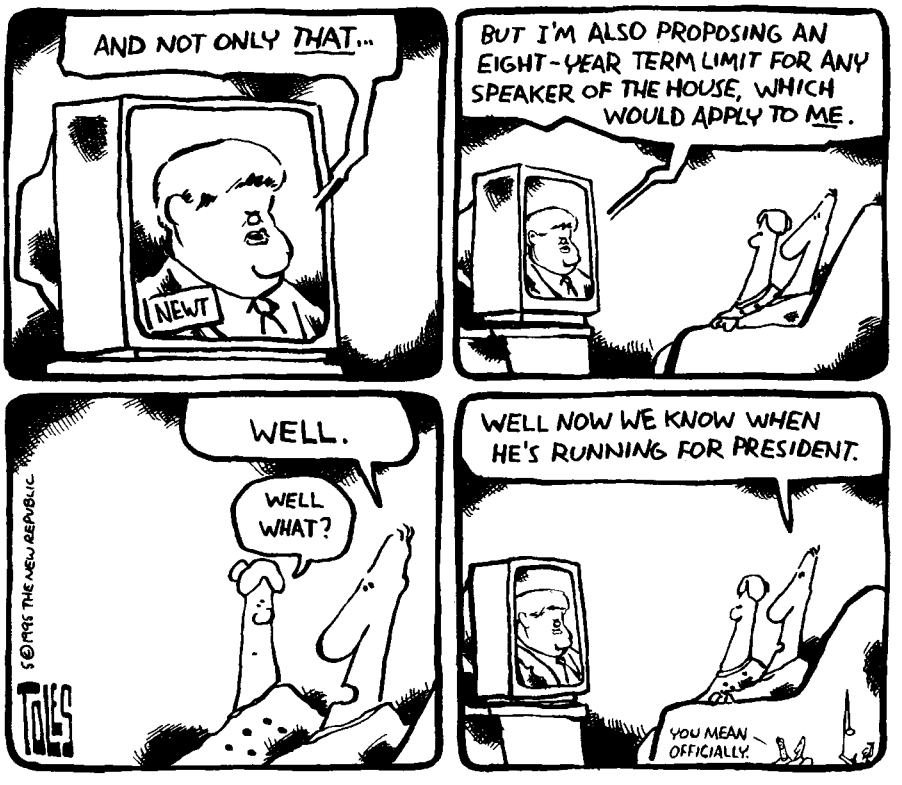
NOTEBOOK

SIC TRANSIT: Chechen troops repulsed a Russian assault on Grozny. CIA director R. James Woolsey resigned. The ACLU requested that the Connecticut police record the race of every motorist they stop. Former Democratic presidential candidate George McGovern said of the November elections, "It's hard for me to believe we really lost because we went too far to the left. I rather think it's our timidity about presenting a liberal agenda." William Steiner, supervisor of bankrupt Orange County, said the county is considering importing 2,000 tons of garbage a day to raise money. After a fire at Buckeye High School in Medina, Ohio, investigators found that five students had convinced a sixth student to set the school ablaze because, due to mild weather, there hadn't been any snow days called yet. Connecticut inmate Eric Harrison was charged with stealing a car to return to his prison cell on time from a seventy-two-hour furlough. The Palm Beach debutante ball was canceled for the first time in thirty years due to lack of interest. The president met with motivational author Stephen Covey, infomercial host Tony Robbins and an unidentified "psycho-historian" at Camp David, where they discussed "the issues of the day." Bill Clinton's horoscope said, "Do research, check references, get promises in writing."


AND NOT ONLY THAT...
NEWT
BUT I'M ALSO PROPOSING AN EIGHT-YEAR TERM LIMIT FOR ANY SPEAKER OF THE HOUSE, WHICH WOULD APPLY TO ME.
WELL.
WELL WHAT?
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TOLES
WELL NOW WE KNOW WHEN HE'S RUNNING FOR PRESIDENT.
YOU MEAN OFFICIALLY

SPARE US: After John C. Salvi III was arrested for last week's killing of two women working in Brookline, Massachusetts, abortion clinics, the press followed with a spate of stories about Salvi's youth. Predictably, they were full of clichés: quiet, unassuming altar boy; dark, troubled misanthrope. (*The Washington Post* managed to get both clichés in the same article.) If we have one request for American journalism in 1995, it is this: please spare us the scavengings of boyhood tales and pop psychologizing. Such stories only trivialize a far too common grotesquerie of American life.

NEWT'S NEW DEAL: When HarperCollins publishers, which is owned by Rupert Murdoch (and is also, by the way, the parent company of our own New Republic books), gave Newt Gingrich a $4.5 million advance, it raised cries of conflict of interest, since many of Murdoch's business ventures might be affected by national legislation. But it was only when Gingrich decided to forgo the advance and collect his royalties after the book is published that the deal became a genuine conflict of interest. Here's why: any author will tell you that the moment of maximum trepidation, and maximum publisher leverage, comes just before a book is published. Will the publisher promote the book? Will enough copies be printed? What reduces the publishers' leverage, under normal circumstances, is the advance. A healthy advance gives the publisher ample reason to promote a book (even if it's not very good), and it gives the author some security in case the publisher makes a half-hearted effort. Gingrich has now given up that security. When the manuscript of *To Renew America* is finished, his financial fate will be entirely in the hands of Murdoch's empire. If HarperCollins promotes the book, Gingrich stands to make millions; his agent predicted in a *New York Times* article that he'll eventually see the full advance. On the other hand, if HarperCollins quietly buries it, he won't make millions. Of course, HarperCollins *is* likely to promote the book, so that Murdoch and the HarperCollins execs can profit. And when Gingrich does reap his millions, he'll be spared the scrutiny and finger-wagging that accompanied the advance. We'll be surprised if anyone notices at all.

HAIL, FELLOW: We extend congratulations to our Contributing Editor Anna Husarska, who has been awarded a 1995 Alicia Patterson Fellowship to study the politics of memory in new democracies. •

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MANILA POSTCARD

MACARTHUR PARK

By William McGurn

Filipinos don't usually need much persuasion to celebrate their holidays. But last December President Fidel Ramos encouraged the citizenry to light up the place in celebration of the Philippines' economic comeback. And so everywhere the lights went up: from the ten-story-high nativity scenes covering the bank buildings of Makati to the simple Philippine *parols*, or Christmas stars, outside the meanest Manila shacks. Even a blackout on December 22 did little to dampen the optimism.

It's hard to remember, but only a few years back, Corazon Aquino was America's sweetheart. In the afterglow of the 1986 People Power Revolution everyone wanted to be first friend of the Philippines. Republicans Richard Lugar and Jack Kemp and Democrats Alan Cranston and Stephen Solarz (hailed as "the Lafayette of the Philippines") proposed a new Marshall Plan to put the country back on its feet. House Speaker Jim Wright of Texas flew in hundreds of Aquino's trademark yellow roses in time for her speech to a joint session of Congress. And Secretary of State George Shultz appeared in Malacanang Palace with a Cory doll pinned to his lapel, telling an audience, à la JFK in Berlin, that "every man is a Filipino."

But the Philippine renaissance never materialized. Far from moving boldly to reform the economy and take on the protected oligopolies Fidel Marcos set up, Aquino vacillated through six years of her presidency, and even managed negative growth for 1991. It wasn't entirely her fault. Mount Pinatubo's eruption was but one of several natural disasters, coup attempts came with alarming regularity and the fall of the Soviet Union depreciated a key money-maker: the U.S. bases. In the end, twelve Philippine senators killed the $4.5 billion, ten-year base phaseout Aquino had negotiated with the Bush administration, and America was given the boot. As unpopular at home as it was in America, it may turn out to be the best service the Senate has ever rendered.

In the short term, of course, it has strained the U.S.-Philippine relationship. Nowhere were the new realities more on display than in the October celebrations marking the fiftieth anniversary of General Douglas MacArthur's return to the Philippines. The contradictions were legion. Imelda Marcos, who was just 16 when the G.I.s hit the shores of her native Leyte, threw a welcoming party where she sang "You Are My Sunshine" for returning U.S. vets. But her eldest son, Ferdinand Jr. ("Bong Bong"), made headlines for denouncing the festivities as "treason," suggesting that the U.S. Navy might use them as an opportunity to dump nuclear waste into Philippine waters.

For his part, President Ramos was annoyed at President Clinton's decision not to come until after the celebrations, just before the November meeting of the Asia Pacific Economic Cooperation forum in Indonesia. So, two days after Leyte, Ramos (West Point, Class of '50) returned the slight by skipping a ceremony at the U.S. Military Cemetery in Makati—the largest such cemetery outside the United States—even though he was listed on the program.

Press coverage, too, became a stage for national petulance. There were exceptions, to be sure; older columnists, such as *The Philippine Star*'s Maximo Soliven, paid fitting tribute to the U.S. contribution. But most of the writing veered between historical revisionism (we would have been better off with the Japanese) and outright silliness (the Philippine guerrillas would have pushed out the Japanese themselves). As usual, ordinary Filipinos were immune to almost all of this—any American in Leyte for the anniversary was likely to find himself dragooned into Filipino family photos and offered a place for dinner.

Yet, however inadvertently, the U.S.-Philippine estrangement has introduced a new honesty into the equation. Whatever the undeniable military value of the U.S. bases here, the massive aid payments that came with them helped corrupt Philippine elites into believing that however badly they behaved, Uncle Sam would in the end bail them out.

This realization has spurred genuine, if limited, reform. Already Ramos has liberalized foreign exchange, opened the banking industry to foreigners (the four foreign banks in the Philippines have not been permitted to open a new branch since World War II) and moved to privatize key state companies such as Petron oil and the phone monopoly.

No one doubts that were the Philippines really to open up, it would become one of the richest countries in Asia; this, after all, is a country whose economy was second only to Japan's until the mid-1960s. Yet I am all too aware that reality has a nasty way of taking down folks who let their hopes get too far ahead of them here. At midnight Mass in San Antonio Church, my wife and I watched a priest hold aloft a wooden statue of the baby Jesus while a Filipino choir delivered the most sublime version of Handel's *Messiah* we have ever heard. Scarcely an hour later children as young as 3 and 4 pressed their hands and faces against the window of our cab at every traffic light in the hopes of begging a spare peso. Which one is the real Philippines? Both.

WILLIAM MCGURN is senior editor of *Far Eastern Economic Review*.

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ON THE HILL

POOR RICHARD

By Weston Kosova

Richard Gephardt was in trouble. By Wednesday, the first day of the new Congress, Newt Gingrich had meticulously mapped out which House Republican would be doing what for virtually every minute over the next three months. The Republican transition team had gone so far as to assign separate task forces to plan "Opening Day Official Activities" (swearing in new members, renaming committees) and "Opening Day Non-Official Activities" (receptions, press conferences). The Democrats, by comparison, were absurdly unprepared. After the election, party leaders froze. Gephardt assembled no equivalent of Gingrich's transition team to handle the change in power, or to sketch out the party's new existence as the opposition.

The result has been chaos. There are almost no areas of agreement among Democrats on policy or strategy. There are only factions. Indeed, the Democrats are more divided politically now than they were last session. Then, Gephardt failed to deliver Democratic votes for both President Clinton's economic stimulus package and his health care bill. And Democrats were in near revolt over NAFTA and the crime bill. Unlike Gingrich, who can round up nearly every Republican vote in the House for a given bill, Gephardt doesn't inspire loyalty—or fear—among the ranks.

Just ask Billy Tauzin. The Louisianian is easily the most conservative Democrat in the House. Last year, he voted against the party 52 percent of the time. He's an enthusiastic supporter of the Contract with America. After the elections, Tauzin began teasing the Democratic leadership with the possibility that he would cross over to the Republican side. He complained that the party was unforgiving toward conservatives, deliberately keeping them out of contention for leadership posts and committee chairmanships. In December, Tauzin even held two meetings with Gingrich, who urged him to defect.

Tauzin told Gephardt he would stay put on one condition: that the party end the practice of "leadership scorecards"—ranking a member's eligibility for assignments based on his or her voting record. He wasn't alone in demanding the change. Democrats Gary Condit and Mike Parker stood alongside him.

Tauzin's protests aside, the scorecards weren't a coercive, cronyist device in themselves, just a way for leaders to entrust ranking posts to members who actually shared the agenda of the party. But, rather than lose another Democrat colleague, even one he knew was more likely to vote with Gingrich most of the time, Gephardt gave in to Tauzin's ultimatum. Tauzin now says he'll stay in the party for at least a year. He thanked Gephardt by forming the American Bipartisan Coalition, a group of House conservatives spoiling for a fight with liberal colleagues.

Heading into the new Congress, Gephardt has bigger problems than Tauzin and his tenacious band of rebels. With the exception of Gephardt's proposal for a middle-class tax cut, the Democrats have offered no package of alternatives to the Contract with America. Nor do they have plans to stand as a party in opposition to its proposals. What's worse, on Monday, two days before the session began, the Democratic leadership still hadn't filled positions on several subcommittees; dozens of staffers didn't know where to report.

Left without a comprehensive strategy, Gephardt has resorted to a simpler one: for the next few weeks, at least, Democratic leaders will attempt to bind Gingrich the man to Gingrich's politics, and wait for one or the other to slip up. If the Contract with America gets snagged by political infighting, the Democrats will strike, attacking Gingrich as an ineffective leader. Likewise, if Gingrich himself falters, letting loose with one of his verbal broadsides, they'll use his nastiness to impugn the Republican agenda by association.

The Democratic strategy is based on a poll number. Hard as it may be for Washingtonians and political hacks to believe, as of the end of December, some 57 percent of Americans still hadn't heard the name Gingrich. Gephardt is out to make sure that when they do, their first impression is negative.

The strategy debuted late last month when Gingrich slipped before his politics did. Immediately after word of Newt's $4.5 million book deal with HarperCollins broke, Gephardt dispatched his deputy, Democratic Whip David Bonior, to the scene. The caustic Bonior lambasted Gingrich on every network. "He was elected to lead this country, not to be up for sale by the highest bidder," he sneered. When Gingrich backed down a few days later after enduring public chiding from fellow Republicans, including Senate Majority Leader Bob Dole ("not too popular around people who talk to me," Dole quipped), Bonior claimed victory for the Democrats.

Democratic leaders are now using the same strategy to attack Gingrich on the political side. Congressional lobbying reform, which was killed off in the final moments of the last congressional session, isn't among the reforms on Gingrich's crowded agenda for the first 100 days. But it is on Gephardt's. While Gingrich crows about eliminating hundreds of staff positions and streamlining committees, the Democrats will harp on

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his reluctance to ban gifts from interest groups and his opposition to forcing lobbyists to register with the government. Not the juiciest of targets, but it's all they've got. The Democrats can only hope they can build themselves up on Republican blunders. Don't bet on it, though. Gephardt will find it a tough sell to make Gingrich appear out of control when he's barely in it himself. •

A military tour of Haiti.

POLICE STATE

By Anna Husarska

ODA 312 reports that Dorvil Luc, an accused goat thief, escaped from prison today. His cellmates claim he used magic to make his way. Guard believes that Dorvil turned himself into a puff of smoke and disappeared under the bars. Analyst comment: Recommend we install smoke detectors to prevent such incidents in the future. We believe the funding is authorized as a force protection matter.
—From the December 1994 logbook of multinational forces in Cap Haitien, Haiti

On December 27, all through the day, angry youths looted a two-story house located behind the army headquarters in the center of Port-au-Prince. Why the *dechoukaj*? Because this simple wood-and-plaster structure—used as a barracks for the Haitian army—was suspected of being a weapons depot.

By late afternoon the place looked as if a swarm of locusts had gone through it. All the furniture and door and window frames were gone. So was the staircase: overzealous downstairs-looters had left their upstairs counterparts stranded and forced to jump from the five-stair stump that still hung from the second story. Strewn on the floor were some rags, rumpled army documents, electricity bills and three dozen pregnancy tests ("MADE IN USA"). The sidewalk was sprinkled with colored pills that smelled of Vitamin B. By nightfall, even the tests and pills were gone, as if vacuumed up.

Given the appalling role Haiti's army played in the country's recent unhappy history, it is not hard to understand why Haitians exorcised their accumulated fear and humiliation on this lone house. It's harder, though, to understand how such an event could even take place. Haiti, and this city in particular, are crammed with security forces of all types, nationalities and persuasions.

In fact, American soldiers in full gear watched the looting from the balcony of the house next door. The yellow-capped International Police Monitors saw it as they drove by in their wide-bodied jeeps. Haitian interim police stood guard on the street outside. Yet none of these centurions prevented the looting: the G.I.s, because they have been told to avoid getting involved unless it is absolutely necessary; the monitors, because they are only monitors; the Haitians, because they have neither the competence nor the authority to intervene.

The trashing of the house was in response to an exceedingly violent riot the day before. Discharged soldiers—who had been let go because the Haitian Armed Forces (FAD'H) have been slashed from 7,500 to 1,500—stormed the military headquarters. Four people were killed and six were injured. For this event, the G.I.s did intervene. And it's quite possible that their involvement warded off a full-blown military revolt. (Here, stepping in *was* absolutely necessary.) At any rate, the establishment of a "secure and stable environment," promised by the U.S.-led multinational force (MNF) when it landed on September 19, still seems far from realized, at least on the streets of Port-au-Prince.

The resurgent chaos is understandable for a variety of reasons: first, the number of foreign troops in the country has dwindled from the 20,000 who initially took part in the invasion-turned-consensual-penetration to a meager 6,000. Of these, half are American. Second, operation "Uphold Democracy" is not the easiest of missions. The multinational force's main task is "to reinforce democratic institutions in Haiti," and in the case of the Haitian military there was nothing very democratic to "reinforce." Third, the Interim Police Security Force (IPSF), which was assembled to keep order while the military and police forces were being restructured under the joint Haitian-U.S. plan, is not exactly a flock of angels.

Taking into account the egregious human rights record of FAD'H, one might think that its members would be barred from serving in the new interim force. Sadly, almost the opposite happened. Only part of the interim force is made up of fresh faces—Haitian refugees who were trained for three months by the United States at the Guantánamo Bay base in Cuba. Others are former FAD'H soldiers who were loosely vetted and then put through a special six-day recycling course. In less than a week, 2,960 uniformed Mr. Hydes were transformed into Dr. Jekylls. (Course reading included such useful civics guidelines as: "I won't give shelter to criminals, escaped convicts or anyone with illegal weapons," and, "I will do my job with no threats and abuse.")

I was curious to see how things were working out. The oddities were abundant. Haiti's new security force consisted of refugee victims and their former prosecutors. And these longtime foes, now comrades, were supposed to be working with the international troops, who had flown in specifically to fight many of the people (namely, the former FAD'H soldiers) they were now supposed to help. So I took a tour and I visited six foreign commands, three in the

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center and three in the north of the country. This is what I saw.

In two towns on the isolated central plateau, Hinche and Mirebalais, and in a coastal town, Gonaives, the G.I.s seemed to be devoting themselves primarily to repairing roads, organizing toll collection and giving lectures on democracy at town meetings. Security needs were attended to, but did not appear to be a top priority.

The most troubling sight was in Hinche and Mirebalais. By ignorance, or perhaps by convenience, many American troops treat the Armed Revolutionary Front for the Haitian People (FRAPH), a violent paramilitary group not unlike the Tontons Macoutes, as if it were just another legitimate political party. Residents of Mirebalais say that many FRAPH leaders—often prominent local citizens—speak English, befriend the Americans, serve as interpreters and, in the end, dupe them. A French priest monitoring human rights in one of these towns went so far as to call the G.I.s "Macoutistes." In Gonaives, a U.S. military commander told me that he enjoys working with people who were in FAD'H because it is the only well-organized structure in the country. (I was about to praise the legendary discipline of Gestapo detachments but decided to behave.)

While U.S. troops in the north also organize community projects—garbage collection, latrine repairs—they seem more devoted to security than their comrades elsewhere. In Limbé the goal is to encourage the interim officers to assume their full duties as fast as possible, even though this sometimes means former torturers have to face former victims. If carried out properly, this strategy can work.

An American sergeant I spoke with in Grande Rivière du Nord, an experienced teacher from a military police academy, obviously knows how to run a boot camp. His command has established authority—and trust—in the region. The people know he'll crack down on the bad guys. A judge in his town issued an arrest warrant for Corporal Prophete Berlain. Vetted and recycled into the interim corps (serial number 0608), Corporal Berlain has now been charged with torturing three people in the period known as "Defacto"—the forced exile of President Jean-Bertrand Aristide. This was an unusual case, in that the culprit was recognized and the victims had the courage to testify against him. Such salutary efforts work in places like Grande Rivière. In other spots, such as the central plateau, where the multinational forces are seen as friendly to FRAPH or FAD'H, the local population is unlikely to come out with complaints.

The only praise for the new Haitian interim police security force I found was in a report from the U.S. mission at the U.N. to the Security Council. Dated December 19, 1994, it announced with parental pride: "Initial reports highlight the success and acceptance of IPSF graduates on the job. In [the southwestern town of] Les Cayes the IPSF has been applauded on two occasions for chasing criminals down in the streets." Such boasting obviously raised many an eyebrow in the human rights community working in Haiti.

There may be more to this praise than just self-satisfaction. The report could be paving the way toward declaring the Haitian environment "secure and stable," which means sending even more of the G.I.s back home and leaving just those who will serve in the future U.N. mission. For the Clinton administration, which has been short on foreign policy successes, the temptation to declare victory and withdraw may be too enticing to pass up.

This would be unwise. The successes brought about by the U.S. troops could be lost if the new Haitian security forces are not given time to take root and gain authority plus competence (if only by hanging around with the G.I.s). If the change from combat khaki to baby blue comes too soon, Haiti's plentiful cohort of low-ranking thugs will simply outwait the Americans. And violence, the numbing violence that has plagued Haiti for too many years, will return. •

Teach for America's misguided critics.

MRS. ED

By Sara Mosle

This decade America's public schools will take on more than 2 million new teachers, a 35 percent increase over the 1980s. This influx is an absolute necessity both to replace an aging teacher population and to accommodate a new baby boom. Yet, as Derek Bok has pointed out in *The Cost of Talent,* the number of undergraduates and graduate students getting degrees in education has plummeted by 40 to 50 percent since the mid-1970s. Minorities, in particular, have become increasingly underrepresented. And the academic level of those who are becoming teachers has also declined. Their scores on college boards are well below the national average in reading and math. Those who do score higher tend to teach in private schools and are more likely than their counterparts to leave teaching after only a few years.

Given these grim realities, one would think that educators would applaud Teach for America, the program started by Princeton graduate Wendy Kopp in 1990 to recruit recent college graduates to teach in poor urban and rural schools. The program has placed some 2,800 teachers in public schools nationwide. It has received

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$2 million from AmeriCorps, President Clinton's national service initiative. So pleased have Baltimore, Seattle, Oakland and all of North Carolina been with their TFA hires that they recently approved its training program as sufficient preparation for certification. Despite these successes and much media praise, TFA has come under fire from the educational establishment. The reason is obvious: Teach for America has begun to pose a threat to the monopoly schools of education have traditionally held over teacher preparation.

The establishment's unofficial spokesperson has been Linda Darling-Hammond, a professor of education at Teachers College, Columbia University. Hammond is a longtime opponent of alternative certification programs and has made an industry of attacking Teach for America. (She's been quoted in nearly every article about the program.) In the September *Phi Delta Kappan*, the leading scholarly journal for teachers, she has produced a densely footnoted screed that has rapidly become the definitive critique of TFA: "Who Will Speak for the Children?: How 'Teach for America' Hurts Urban Schools and Students." The essay has attracted wide attention, most notably in *The New Yorker*, which made favorable mention of Hammond's arguments in a recent "Talk of the Town."

What's galling about Hammond's arguments to someone like me—I entered teaching through Teach for America and have taught for three years in public schools in Upper Manhattan—is their utter remove from the realities of the classroom. Hammond insists that the program has been a colossal failure. Her evidence, such as it is, is almost entirely from secondary sources, which she has culled for examples that support her thesis. She offers no indication of ever having visited a TFAer's classroom. Her copious footnotes, which have impressed commentators, mostly refer to her own writings, to "private" communications or to selective bits of Michael Shapiro's *Who Will Teach for America?* that run counter to Shapiro's own conclusion, which is that "Teach for America has succeeded."

For example, Hammond offers one former principal, Beverly Hall, who she says was unhappy with her TFA recruits. Strangely, that's not what Hall told *The New York Times* on December 5, 1990. Then Hall described her TFA hire as "a natural ... a very successful teacher," who "taught the best math lesson I've ever seen." Hammond cites an anonymous superintendent at length, who she claims was dissatisfied with the program. She also quotes Miguel Ceballos, a high school math teacher in East L.A., whose words about his students she pieces together out of context from nine pages in Shapiro's book. "One day you'll teach and the next day they'll forget," Ceballos said. "I tried doing it by rote learning and that doesn't work.... I keep asking, 'What am I doing here?'... I'm losing them." From this, Hammond draws the sweeping conclusion that Ceballos "clearly lacks an understanding of how people learn mathematics," is "without a repertoire of techniques beyond rote learning" and is "blaming the students for his lack of skill." In Shapiro's book, though, Ceballos uses a variety of techniques—a baseball game to teach fractions, for instance. He isn't lamenting his inadequacy as a teacher, but the specific difficulty he had teaching a single subject: decimals. He worries about losing his students not to inattention but to gangs. Yet Hammond twists such candor into a confession of failure. This is typical of her method throughout.

Far from recognizing the need to attract more qualified people to the profession, Hammond insists that "the alternative to smart, untrained TFA recruits are smart, well-trained recruits from an array of top colleges." But this is simply not true.

One of the biggest misunderstandings about Teach for America teachers is that they have somehow circumvented the normal rules for becoming teachers in the cities and towns where they've been sent. In fact, wherever TFAers have worked, they have entered the classroom through existing routes, most of which were designed precisely to bring good teachers to disadvantaged areas.

Take New York City, Hammond's example. Nearly one-sixth of the city's teachers are uncertified. They are what are known as "permanent substitutes" who teach on "temporary" licenses. The only requirements for this license are a B.A., a passing score on the National Teachers Exam and no criminal record. I taught with such a license. So do more than 10,000 other teachers in the city each year—of which New York's 200 or so TFAers are a tiny subset. Actually, a 1991 study by the Community Service Society found that in the city's eight poorest districts—where, incidentally, nearly all TFAers work—the fraction of uncertified teachers was closer to one-third. That's because, as Hammond elsewhere concedes, "The districts where most [TFAers] are hired are poor urban and rural districts with high turnover rates."

Even so, 70 percent of TFA's charter members completed their two-year commitment, and 60 percent went on to teach a third year. The rates have only gotten better. Among the 1992 corps, 84 percent completed their two years. Yet, according to the United Federation of Teachers, nearly 20 percent of all teachers citywide quit after their *first* year. Furthermore, many TFAers have gone back to school to take precisely the courses that Hammond says they need. And TFAers are hardly unusual for teaching before they go on to ed school. That's what Hammond herself did, and half of Teachers College's own students have done the same.

What's more, many of the credentials accepted by the city are far more dubious than those offered by TFA. The city doesn't care where you get your education credits—as long as you receive the requisite number. Consequently, many teachers take correspondence courses or equivalency exams to get their credentials. I received six credits myself—the equivalent of two semester-long courses—by passing a three-hour multiple-choice exam in the teaching of reading.

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This statement was written and signed in response to the Administration welfare "reform" bill introduced in the summer of 1994. Spurred by this proposal, Republicans are now championing much worse barbarisms. We should not let ourselves be driven into supporting the bad in the hopes of fending off the worse. We stand against policies which deprive poor children and scapegoat poor mothers. A politics of blaming the poor fosters a downward cycle of impoverishment, stigmatization, and despair.

— Linda Gordon, Frances Fox Piven, Louise Trubek

WOMEN ACADEMICS CONCERNED ABOUT WELFARE

As women scholars who have studied welfare programs in the United States and other democracies, and who share a concern for poor women and children, we feel a responsibility to speak out in opposition to the Clinton administration welfare reform proposal.

The most publicized feature of the proposal is a two-year lifetime limit on cash assistance from AFDC. The limit shreds precisely that portion of our social safety net on which poor women and children rely. Yet the evidence shows that the majority of recipients do not stay on "welfare" very long at one time, but turn to AFDC when they are forced to by work or family emergencies. Many women also turn to welfare to escape from domestic violence. A two-year limit would destroy that lifeline.

The Bush administration began freely granting waivers allowing the states to "experiment" with "reforms," and the Clinton administration is continuing this practice. Few of these waivers concern true experiments or reforms. Instead, reminiscent of the 19th century when welfare was a system of disciplinary tutelage, they usually cut welfare grants which are already everywhere below the poverty level. Some states are reducing family benefits if a child is truant or if an additional child is born. From the beginning of AFDC in 1935, the federal government provided some protection against the arbitrary ill-treatment of recipients by states and counties. That protection should not be forfeited.

The effort to present a "revenue-neutral" welfare reform has resulted in the ludicrous prospect of severe cutbacks in programs that serve some of the poor in order to pay for programs that will ostensibly help others of the poor. Clearly this makes little moral or programmatic sense.

Just as troublesome as these programmatic initiatives is the vilification of welfare recipients for lacking the values of work and responsibility which has characterized the Administration's talk about reform. This rhetoric undermines respect for the hard and vital work that all women do as parents. It is particularly egregious when directed against poor single mothers who confront the triple burdens of heading households, parenting, and eking out a livelihood. Given the popular misimpression that welfare recipients are overwhelmingly minority women, this pillorying of poor women also contributes to racist stereotypes.

While women have always been consigned to low wage jobs, the situation of working women trying to support children has worsened dramatically in the last two decades as wage levels plummeted. The Administration proposal is silent about that problem.

Real welfare reform should be directed to ending poverty, not welfare. We should strive for widely available day care, medical insurance, and education, and for improvements in working conditions and wages. At the same time we should preserve the programs of social support — variously called social security or welfare — that have been vital to the safety, health and morale of millions of women, men, and children in the U.S.

Contributions to the effort to defend women and children on welfare can be sent to either the Coalition on Human Needs, 1000 Wisconsin Avenue NW, Washington, DC, 20007 or Up and Out of Poverty NOW! Coalition, care of National Organization for Women 1000 16th Street NW, (Suite 700) Washington, DC 20036

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At the same time, a year of graduate work I did at Oxford is simply not counted because the Board of Ed has never been able to figure out how many credits I should receive since Oxford doesn't award them.

There's a certain lack of perspective exhibited by those who complain about TFA. The city is notorious for its inability to fire incompetents. Several districts are renowned for their corruption. Far too many schools in the city are dilapidated, grossly overcrowded and without supplies. Aren't these problems a little more pressing? Shapiro, Hammond's pet source, remarks of TFA's success: "If this is arrogance, then it is arrogance of the best kind, the sort necessary to withstand the assaults that come from ... a system that continues treating teachers as 'bodies.'"

Hammond, though, dismisses TFAers as "advantaged college graduates for whom TFA serves as something useful to do on their way to their 'real jobs,' in law, medicine or business." I'm not sure what she means by "advantaged," but if she means that TFAers tend to have higher board scores, come from colleges with more rigorous academic programs and score far higher on the National Teachers Exam than other first-year teachers, she's right—but why is this bad?

And if she means that because of their high academic standing, they are often lured away by other professions, then she's right again. But as Richard Murnane, an education professor at Harvard, has demonstrated, this is true of all teachers—not just TFAers—who have more rigorous academic backgrounds. All professions must compete for talent. It's not a badge of honor that the worst public schools have tended to attract those with the fewest options.

Hammond insinuates that TFAers are somehow contemptuous of minority kids. What's so outrageous about this claim is that Teach for America has done a far better job of recruiting minorities to teach than ed schools have. Forty percent of TFAers are people of color. That's true of only 10 percent of ed school graduates nationally.

Hammond closes her argument by sanctimoniously quoting Jonathan Kozol: "Charity is no substitute for justice." But she seems to have forgotten how Kozol got his start. His first book, *Death at an Early Age*, begins: "With no training in education and no experience as a teacher, I was sent into an overcrowded ghetto school on a substitute basis, given a year-long assignment ... to teach a fourth-grade class." The year was 1964, and Kozol had just returned from Oxford, where he had studied poetry on a Rhodes Scholarship. In other words, he was exactly the kind of person Teach for America recruits and whom Hammond disdains. And as his book painfully recounts, he was surrounded by teachers, many of them grossly neglectful, who had exactly the kind of credentials that Hammond finds so indispensable.

Kozol was famously fired before the year was out for "curriculum deviation": he taught a Langston Hughes poem to his class. The school board's official explanation for his dismissal is eerily similar to criticism of TFAers today: "He was unsuitable in training, character and temperament" and "obviously unsuited for the highly responsible profession of teaching." If Hammond has her way, there's little chance the Kozols of the future will ever enter the classroom. And we would be poorer for it.

SARA MOSLE, a former assistant literary editor of TNR, writes frequently about education.

The very selective Israeli army.

WE DON'T WANT YOU

By Gershom Gorenberg

Hanit Magid arrived at the Israeli army's induction center in late December, 1994, and traded in her civvies for olive drab. A soft-spoken, athletic 18-year-old with long dark hair, Magid hopes to become a physical fitness trainer. Like other Israelis, Magid grew up expecting compulsory military service. But the term "compulsory" is ironic in her case: a year ago her local draft center told her she was medically exempt. As a premature infant, she'd had a tube surgically inserted to drain excess fluid from her skull, and army rules forbid drafting anyone with a foreign object in his or her body.

For Magid, the Israeli version of a 4F was no gift. She filed her appeal; her childhood doctors called the press; a national newspaper spread her story over two full pages. At a medical board hearing, she found dozens of other men and women, people begging to be drafted. Some were on their sixth appeal. Magid was luckier: the medical officers agreed on the spot to let her in.

The story underlines the Israeli army's growing manpower problem: it has too much. From the country's first day, a small population and big defense needs demanded total mobilization, with all Jews eligible for conscription. According to Reuven Gal, formerly the army's chief psychologist and currently director of the Israeli Institute for Military Studies, Israel once drafted more than 90 percent of its eligible men, more than any other country in this century; only wartime North Vietnam came close. Most women have also been called up. Today, while the military is still hungry for combat-fit recruits, the universal draft is providing too many men and women for support tasks.

The simple solution would be to hand out exemptions. But in Israel, the idea of selective service is regarded as an attack on sacred values, and on the poor and uneducated—the people *most* likely to be ex-

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empted. Debate is growing over conscription policy and the army denies what its own figures reveal: that it is gradually becoming more discriminating.

The surplus is the price of several successes. The first success was population growth, always an Israeli goal. The children of a mid-'70s baby boom are now draft age. Planeloads of immigrants from the former Soviet Union have boosted the population by 10 percent in five years, adding more recruits.

Meanwhile, the military has gone high tech. In Israel's early years, notes Hebrew University historian Martin van Creveld, it faced an arms embargo, leaving it "long on manpower and short on technology." Today it has the smartest arms the United States and local R&D can provide, and the army needs what one politician recently called, with some spite, "courageous technicians." So the brightest and most fit recruits undergo long training. Others are not only unneeded as grunts, but cost money that could be used for weapons.

Then there's peace. To be sure, the fifteen-year-old accord with Egypt didn't eliminate the chance of war, Israel will have to keep up its guard after what is expected to be a "cold peace" with Syria, and force reductions based on the emerging Palestinian peace are years away. Still, the treaty with Egypt clearly reduced the danger of a war on all fronts, and eliminated the logistics burden of holding the Sinai Peninsula, larger than all of Israel. Israel has now signed an agreement with Jordan that is expected to produce a "warm peace." Even if a treaty with Syria doesn't explicitly call for troop cuts, it could produce the result indirectly. Israel, says Joseph Alpher, director of Tel Aviv University's Jaffee Center for Strategic Studies, "envisages compensating for the territory and high ground of the Golan with high-tech means." That would be expensive, and every new expenditure increases pressure to cut personnel.

The bottom line, Jaffee Center reports show, is that Israel's regular forces have remained virtually the same size since the mid-'80s. Manpower needs are expected to fall gradually, and in the long term peace could reduce the need for combat troops. A military source says that "as a policy, being more selective isn't under discussion." But army figures show that 17.5 percent of eligible men are now exempted from service. Another 15 percent are discharged early—meaning one-third of Israeli men don't serve a full three years. For women, who are barred from combat, compulsory service has been sliced from two years to twenty-one months. Men who complete regular service remain in the reserves until they're 50. But, among reservists, selective service has become a fact, with combat soldiers called up for long periods every year, while most others do little time.

Yet the myth of a people's army is woven into Israeli life. Bearing arms is part of the Zionist code; soldiers are bused to Jerusalem's Yad Vashem Holocaust Museum as part of their military education. The army is expected not only to defend the country, but to supply a shared experience erasing the lines between rich and poor, native and immigrant. Van Creveld has written that with "the seclusion from civilian society, the strange dress and haircuts, the hazing, the instruction in the country's lore, the element of bloodshed," army service has been a significant rite of initiation.

The military is also an avenue for social mobility, a way for poor children with brains and determination to get ahead. Combat units are assigned recruits who have scored highly on intelligence, aptitude and motivation tests, and all officers come up through the ranks. "When I come and say I'm a reserve officer in the paratroops, it opens doors," says Addis Aklum, 29, who arrived in Israel from Ethiopia when he was 14, without his parents. Aklum was the first Ethiopian to enter the highly respected paratroops, and the first to win lieutenant's bars. In the late '80s, he says, as many as two-thirds of young Ethiopians reached combat units, many becoming commissioned and noncommissioned officers. "The army seemed like a place where you could advance on the basis of your ability," he says. Often, though, kids from the wrong towns and neighborhoods end up as cooks, mechanics or other support troops, and some land exemptions as undereducated, or undermotivated. Recently, more young Ethiopians have taken those routes, and Aklum says that if the army becomes choosier, "the Ethiopians will be the first to suffer."

It's the better-off young people who are most likely to make the crack units. To improve their chances, some teens sign up for pre-army courses. In the southern town of Eilat, for instance, the nonprofit Challenge Center runs an evening course for twelfth-graders that includes training in the desert, orienteering and marching while carrying comrades on stretchers. Graduates finish up with two weeks of climbing in the Italian and French Alps. "The army is compulsory," says Oliver Neuwirth, who runs the course. "People say, 'As long as I have to do it, I might as well do it the best I can.' "

Military service, however essential, also has a price, and not just in physical casualties. "There are young people who are left with scars," stresses Reuven Gal, "either because of combat, or simply because of being in the army, with its demands." Training for fighting units is grueling. As a recently discharged soldier describes it, "They want to push you to the edge of breaking down and make you function there. We never had enough time to eat, or to sleep, or to piss.... Then they'd punish us for falling asleep in a class.... In maneuvers, we'd fall asleep standing up, and one commander used to kick guys in the chest to wake them up." Those who can't bear the military and are released early bear a stigma afterward.

Yet virtually no one publicly supports issuing more exemptions. "Without a doubt," says Moshe Nativ, a deep-voiced reserve general and former chief of the army's Manpower Branch, "selective service would be convenient from a purely military perspective." Nativ opposes the idea, however, and neither he nor anyone familiar with the military can name one general who

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backs it. Among politicians, opposition is intense. Labor Party Knesset member Ra'anan Cohen articulates the mood, saying, "Most of those rejected will be the disadvantaged, who will only become more alienated."

An obvious option would be to take everyone, but for less time. That, however, would mean early discharges for combat troops as well. But combat troops are still needed, and they don't become fully trained until the final months of service. Making up for conscripts with already overburdened reservists would be a politician's nightmare.

The military could balance a shortfall of conscripts in fighting units by signing up more volunteers as career soldiers. But career soldiers get paid well; conscripts are cheap. Worse, there's no guarantee that the smart and success-bound will sign up for extra time; they're eager to conquer the universities.

Some argue for civilian national service: anyone the military doesn't need would be given other work. But the desire to serve has come from the obvious need to defend one's country. Forestry work isn't likely to fit the bill.

A year ago an army-appointed commission gave the government a secret report on the manpower glut. Recommendations reportedly included sending conscripts to police duty and reducing the period of service for male soldiers. Neither move, it appears, will solve the problem. Gradually, with no general or government wanting to say so aloud, more Israelis will get the news that so angered Hanit Magid: that they need not report. "I don't think the army can turn away someone who wants to serve and contribute," Magid told me just before her call-up. But it can, and it probably will.

GERSHOM GORENBERG is op-ed editor of *The Jerusalem Report.*

Budget cutters go nuts.

ZERO HOUR

By Fred Barnes

The zero option—killing federal programs by having the House of Representatives alone refuse to fund them—is an old idea that caught on fast with House Speaker Newt Gingrich and his allies. House Majority Leader Dick Armey is a longtime supporter. "I've been talking about it since Moby Dick was a minnow," he says. Representative Bob Livingstone of Louisiana, the new Appropriations Committee chairman, grabbed the idea and began promoting it a few weeks after the November 8 election. Gingrich quickly climbed on board. Addressing House Republicans on December 5, 1994, he hailed the zero strategy: "We don't have to de-authorize [programs], we simply have to not pay for them." Then, in an interview just before Christmas, he vowed so many programs would be "zeroed out" this year that "we'll have effectively shrunk the size of the federal government and shifted power back home to state and local governments and to private citizens."

Why the zero option? Because the Gingrich team is impatient to take advantage of the current mood in favor of cutting Washington down to size. And de-financing programs makes the job faster and easier. Under normal procedures, programs can be de-authorized when they come up for renewal, which in many cases is every five years. In those, it would take approval of the House, the Senate and the president for programs to actually die. "That's the long-term approach," says Livingstone. "That way it takes a couple of years to start de-authorizing." But why wait? "Defunding only takes one House," says Livingstone. If the House wipes out financing for a program, the program will die, "no matter what happens in the Senate, no matter what the president says."

This is a novel approach for several reasons. First, says Livingstone, "the emphasis for the last forty years has always been on increasing spending." That requires the assent of both houses and the White House. "But that's not going to be our emphasis," he adds. Second, those who want to kill programs, namely conservative Republicans, "have never had the ability to."

The list of vulnerable programs is bound to be long. Just after Christmas, Armey sent a letter to the new chairmen of the authorizing committees and the Appropriations subcommittees. They were instructed to submit hit lists. The National Endowment for the Arts, the National Endowment for the Humanities and the Corporation for Public Broadcasting are "top prospects," says Armey. Gingrich and Livingstone have announced their intent to zero out all three. There's a political as well as an ideological reason for targeting them: so Republicans can't be accused of killing only programs for the poor. In a January 2 interview on C-SPAN, Gingrich denounced NEA, NEH and CPB as programs cherished by "a bunch of rich upper-class people." Other targets? Armey says eliminating the Small Business Administration "is a very high possibility." Livingstone says whole departments—Education, Energy, Commerce—may be zeroed out, though probably not before next year.

In picking committee chairmen, Gingrich's boldest move was elevating Livingstone over four Appropriations Republicans with more seniority. He, Armey and Representative John Boehner of Ohio, the new head of the House Republican Conference, didn't trust the four to carry out the zero option. "We needed someone who could run the committee and make things happen," says Boehner. "When you looked down the list, Livingstone was it. He's hard-nosed. He's part of the team.... He's got good management capabilities." More important, says Armey, "He's got a reputation as a guy with a sharp pencil."

Livingstone, first elected in 1977, relishes his new

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role. If there's something he'd rather do than eliminate federal programs, he's not letting on. His worry is that Representative Bill Archer of Texas, the chairman of the Ways and Means Committee, is overpromising on tax cuts. "He hasn't been talking about a lot of spending cuts. He's going to look like Santa Claus. I'm going to look like the Grinch." Livingstone doesn't mind the image. "I'm one of the guys who does the dirty work." He found favor with Gingrich when he led an attempted takeover in 1992 of the National Republican Congressional Committee, the campaign arm of the House GOP. The revolt failed narrowly, but Gingrich admired Livingstone's seventeen-point plan for cutting spending, staff and fund-raisers. When Gingrich later installed his own person, Representative Bill Paxon of New York, at the committee, the Livingstone plan was adopted in toto.

There was a threshold problem Gingrich had to overcome before he could catapult Livingstone to Appropriations chairman. Livingstone was running for another job, GOP conference chairman, No. 4 in the House Republican hierarchy. Boehner, who also wanted to be conference chairman, asked Livingstone if there was a post he'd rather have. Livingstone mentioned Appropriations. But he didn't want to run for it because Bill Young of Florida, who had more seniority and was a friend, might seek it. In late November, Gingrich intervened, offering Livingstone the Appropriations chairmanship. Gingrich had persuaded Young not to run—how he managed to do so Livingstone won't say. "Gingrich made the call," he says without elaboration.

As neat and clean as it sounds, the zero strategy won't be a snap. There's the Senate to contend with. Its members—particularly centrist Republicans—can fight back by thwarting House Republicans on other issues. By threatening to join Democrats in opposition to an increase in defense spending or a new crime bill—two cherished goals of House Republicans—they could force the Gingrich crowd to yield on some program kills. Still, there's hope. Though Livingstone's counterpart on the Senate Appropriations Committee, Mark Hatfield of Oregon, is a moderate, Livingstone says the senator has already advised him of at least one program to be zeroed out. Other Republican senators sound more Gingrichian. Pete Domenici of New Mexico, chairman of the Senate Budget Committee, has talked about killing hundreds of programs. Richard Lugar of Indiana, boss of the Senate Agriculture Committee, has suggested deep cuts in farm programs. "If anyone thinks there's going to be a stalemate between the House and Senate, they're wrong," Livingstone insists.

There's also the House-Senate conference to deal with. On appropriations bills, the conference will include Democrats and Republicans not as committed to killing programs as Livingstone. "This is where Livingstone's role is critical," says Boehner. "He's the guy who has to stand there and not blink." Livingstone agrees. "Our leverage is incredibly strong," he says. And his eyes are wide open. •

The Judiciary chairman's S&L-fest.

HYDE-BOUND

By David Moberg

After two decades in Congress representing the conservative middle-class suburbs west of Chicago, white-haired, corpulent Henry Hyde now holds a key position of power. As chairman of the House Judiciary Committee, Hyde now has jurisdiction over half of the ten points in the Republicans' Contract with America. Gracious and quick-witted, the 70-year-old Hyde is best known for his amendment prohibiting federal funds for abortion. He has made a reputation as a strong voice on the right with a streak of thoughtful independence. He is also known for his willingness to work with Democrats.

Yet Hyde assumes the chairmanship with a legal thorn in his side. He is a defendant in a $17.2 million lawsuit by the Resolution Trust Corporation for his role as a director, from 1981 to 1984, of Clyde Federal Savings and Loan, which federal officials shut down in 1991 at a cost now estimated at $67 million. The charges against Hyde, if true, amount to serious wrongdoing, in his roles both as thrift director and as a congressman.

Hyde's elevation to committee chairman only raises more questions. Most obviously, he will be overseeing the work of the system that is charged with judging and prosecuting him. Politically, House Speaker Newt Gingrich, having made his mark attacking Democratic congressional corruption, now appears to countenance an even more costly, if different, alleged malfeasance by one of his lieutenants. If the Republicans revive Whitewater hearings, Democrats will have grounds to demand similar investigations of Hyde—whose S&L debacle cost taxpayers a lot more than the Arkansas land deal did.

When the RTC suit was filed in April 1993, Hyde insisted he soon would be dropped from the case. He wasn't. After eighteen months of legal proceedings, Federal District Court Judge Brian Duff indicated last summer that a trial may be inevitable. Until then, Clyde's records are not available, and it is difficult for outsiders to prove or disprove Hyde's guilt. But what is public makes the charges plausible—and substantial enough to call into question whether Hyde should hop into the chairman's seat until they're finally settled.

The RTC has charged Hyde and fellow directors and officers of Clyde with gross negligence, mismanagement, breach of fiduciary duties and breach of contract. The lawsuit cites several specifics. Among them:

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losses from options trading that violated federal guidelines; participation in a pool of out-of-state mortgages without following the right procedures or guidelines; and a loan to a luxury condo development in Texas arranged by a broker with a shady past. In the last case, the RTC said, Clyde "relied upon information provided and analyzed by" the broker, who stood to benefit financially from the loan.

Although Hyde now says it was "foolish" to join Clyde's board, he insists he wasn't deeply involved in the company's decisions. He claims to have made only $300 in fees for each monthly meeting (the RTC reports finding no record of what he was paid). Hyde says he was simply a victim of the early '80s recession.

But Hyde's actions were not merely "foolish." The congressman had been a prominent member of the Banking Committee immediately prior to joining Clyde's board of directors. In that role, he helped write laws on the fiduciary responsibility of bank and thrift directors. The conflict of interest here should have been recognized as egregious. Think of the outcry that would ensue if a member of Congress left the Armed Services Committee and joined the board of Rockwell or Lockheed.

DRAWING BY JOHN SPRINGS FOR THE NEW REPUBLIC

Nor was Hyde simply a passive director. Minutes of board meetings show him to have been involved in making and seconding important motions and voting on risky loans. For example, he seconded the motion that permitted Clyde to begin trading futures through Refco Inc., a firm with a long history of trading violations. (Refco, which came to fame for helping Hillary Clinton with cattle futures, was not on the list of firms recommended by Clyde's own financial adviser.) Minutes also point out that Hyde was present when the board heard regulatory reports critical of Clyde's investments. Hyde was there in 1982 when the board chairman read a letter from the Federal Home Loan Bank board supervisor indicating that Clyde would remain solvent for only another thirteen to fourteen months. In 1983 auditors reported rampant mismanagement, noting that Clyde had overcharged the government for interest on student loans. Hyde agreed to send Clyde's lawyer and auditor to Washington to seek a review of regulatory criticisms of Clyde, but publicly available minutes show no effort by Hyde to fix the problems.

Hyde may have acted improperly not only as thrift director but also as a congressman. When he resigned from the board in 1984, Clyde's liabilities exceeded its assets by $30 million. Yet Hyde claimed it was solvent, since the deregulated thrifts had great leeway in accounting procedures. In 1989 President Bush moved to eliminate some of those accounting abuses in his S&L bailout legislation. Hyde led the unsuccessful fight to block a key provision of Bush's plan. Hyde's action was not surprising: he had long supported much of the thrifts' favored legislation, and they supported him. From 1981 to 1992 he received roughly $125,000 in campaign contributions and speaking fees from the financial industry, a notable sum for a safe seat such as Hyde's.

There was also a more direct, personal conflict of interest in Hyde's advocacy. If he had succeeded in blocking Bush's provision, Clyde might have been able to stay open longer, concealing the negligence and mismanagement that the RTC says brought about its downfall. Instead, the Office of Thrift Supervision put Clyde in receivership under the RTC in 1990.

According to bank consultant Tim Anderson, a number of Illinois thrifts played a central role early in the S&L crisis. They often bought up risky loans of many Sunbelt thrift operators. Anderson suggests they did so to protect fraudulent and even criminal behavior; by delaying confrontation with the crisis, the industry and its allies greatly raised the overall cost of the eventual bailout. Another question is whether Hyde knowingly participated in furthering this strategy.

Hyde is the only member of Congress who has been sued for playing a direct, fiduciary role in the thrift collapse and one of few members to serve as an S&L director while in Congress. (Republicans Edward Derwinski and the late Edward Madigan of Illinois also were directors of failed Illinois thrifts.) "Illinois in the aggregate is responsible for making the crisis worse," argues attorney Walker Todd, who recently left the Cleveland Federal Reserve Bank after twenty years with the Fed. "The

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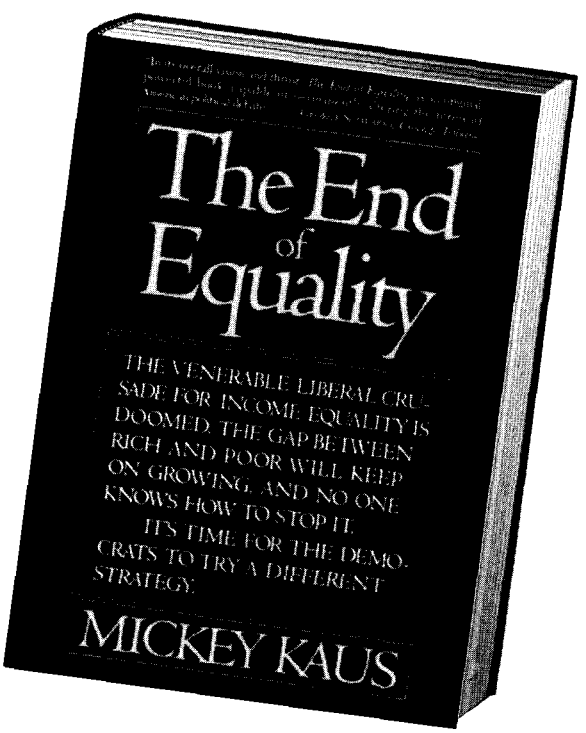
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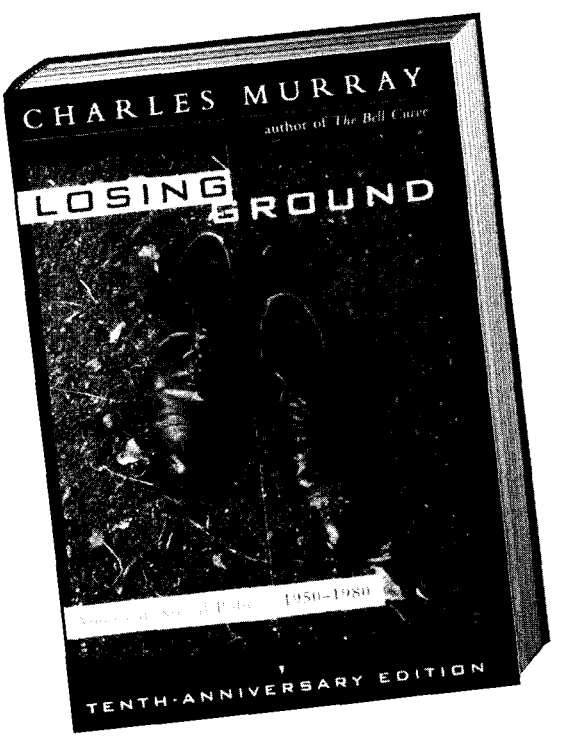

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main players were principals of the U.S. Savings League, but these three public officials could be characterized as being bamboozled by the principals of the league."

Fred Cedarholm, a former RTC investigator in the Chicago office, agrees that Illinois was "central to the crisis." But the RTC investigation of Illinois was cut short in 1993 when the Chicago office was closed in the name of bureaucratic consolidation, following decisions made by the Bush administration; all the knowledgeable investigators were lost. "We were really starting to turn up some very good things, and they didn't want them pursued," Cedarholm said about Bush officials. "I think we were too close."

Besides abortive investigations, Illinois also has a poor record on criminal prosecution in the S&L scandal. From 1990 to 1993, Fred Forman, a staunch Republican, headed the U.S. attorney's office in Illinois. During his tenure, the office stood out as a glaring exception to what was going on around the country. Nationwide, fraud was involved in many S&L failures; various government agencies estimate that between 10 percent and 70 percent of all cases involved criminal activity. Yet during these years the U.S. attorney in Illinois, in cases where the RTC made criminal referrals, brought criminal charges at only one-fourth the national average. These records raise the question of whether the presence of three prominent Republicans, including Hyde, on the boards inhibited either the investigation of Illinois thrifts or criminal prosecutions.

As Judiciary Committee chairman, Hyde could be involved in deciding questions about prosecution of thrift cases, though the Banking Committees have primary responsibility for S&L legislation. Further, Hyde has announced that he will hold hearings early next year on the "prosecutorial effectiveness" of the current U.S. attorney in Illinois. Will he also look into the past prosecutorial effectiveness in S&L cases? Could such an investigation influence the attorneys who might decide whether to pursue a case against Hyde? Will Hyde's prominence influence the willingness of RTC attorneys to settle the case in a way favorable to Hyde?

"Failure to clear the air on the charges against Hyde should leave everyone worried," argues Boston University finance professor Ed Kane, who has written extensively on the role of Congress in the thrift disaster. Kane lamented that Hyde's case has never received an ethical review despite "questions of honesty, influence peddling and conflict of interest." Hyde's actions, he said, may have gone beyond simple conflict of interest to acting as a channel of interest for thrift industry leaders. "There's enough to be worried about to say that an investigation ought to occur," Kane said. "It would serve Mr. Hyde, assuming he is innocent, to have the facts clarified. The approach has been just the opposite—to hope it blows over." It's possible, though, that the storm is just starting to gather force.

DAVID MOBERG is a senior editor of *In These Times.*

Reading the contract's fine print.

BILL OF GOODS

By Herbert Stein

Party platforms adopted at conventions to nominate a presidential candidate have a life expectancy of about two days. Now we have a platform of the 1994 Republican candidates for Congress that still commands attention almost four months after it was unveiled. And it has just been published as a book, *Contract with America, The Bold Plan by Rep. Newt Gingrich, Rep. Dick Armey, and the House Republicans to Change the Nation.* Somebody apparently thinks there is still life in it.

The choice of the word "contract" rather than "platform" was brilliant. "Contract" suggests a much stronger commitment. It suggests two or more parties, each of whom has agreed to do something in exchange for considerations provided by others. The American people, presumably, put the Republicans in power in exchange for their promise to do specified things, and now the Republicans have to do those things in exchange for having been put in power. Moreover, the Republicans pledge that the people can throw them out if they do not abide by their promises.

Of course, the whole thing is artificial. Most of the people who put the Republicans in office did not know what was in the contract and did not condition their vote on it. And the Republicans cannot give the people the right to throw them out. The people already have that right, in the Constitution.

After a presidential candidate is nominated, interest

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Where We Stand

By Albert Shanker, President
American Federation of Teachers

Divisive Rhetoric

It's always a big temptation to turn the position of people on the other side of a debate into a caricature. That's what's happening right now in our discussions of education reform—and in particular Goals 2000. But this approach shuts down discussion and makes it extremely difficult to come to reasonable conclusions.

Rae Young Bond, a former director of public affairs for the National Governors' Association (NGA) and an evangelical Christian, believes that education reform is too important to be debated in this way. In a recent NGA report, "Voices from the Field: Communicating with the Public About Education Reform," Bond admits that she shares the uneasiness about certain aspects of school reform felt by many people on the right: "I have real concerns about the schools' evaluating my child's self-perception or self-esteem, his interpersonal skills, or other affective areas. In some areas, proposed outcome-based education measures have clearly gone too far, making all of the measures suspect to some in the current climate of distrust."

"There is an implicit assumption that none of the critics' views and beliefs are valid ."

On the other hand, Bond also supports the National Education Goals: "I want the schools to evaluate my son's performance in mathematics, science, grammar and writing. I believe the National Education Goals are important because I need some valid criteria by which to judge whether my son is gaining the knowledge he needs to succeed. Indeed, what should a ninth grader be doing in mathematics?" And she worries that people on the right and the left have gotten so caught up in stereotyping each other (and scoring points based on these stereotypes) that we are forfeiting the possibility of talking to each other and staking out common ground:

> The rhetoric on both sides of the issue threatens real communication that could build on the shared concerns of parents and citizens across the political spectrum and build real support for the changes needed to improve the education system in the United States.

Bond sees this tendency in the discussions of school reform she has been reading:

> . . . much of the literature on building public support for education reform largely deals with finding ways to work around the opposition. There is an implicit assumption that none of the critics' views and beliefs are valid, that they are obstacles to be avoided or moved. It also seems to assume that all opposition to education reform is part of a larger political and/or religious agenda.

Bond also knows from her own experience how some "school reformers" see the "religious right." Several months ago, she was part of a discussion about building public support for education reform, and when the stereotypes about "right-wing extremists" who are "pursuing a social agenda beyond education" got particularly thick, she identified herself as an evangelical Christian. People seemed taken aback, she says, and after the meeting, one of them "noted with wonder that she appreciated my remarks and was quite surprised that I was an evangelical Christian because I was so 'intelligent.'"

Undoubtedly there are people who live up to the stereotype of the religious bigot who raises his own children not to ask questions and would like to make sure other people's kids are raised in the same way. But Bond believes that most Christian parents do not have a political agenda. They want what the overwhelming majority of other parents want—safe schools with orderly classrooms where children can learn worthwhile content and parents can be involved in their kids' education.

Bond does not believe that there are no differences between the various sides debating the best way to improve public education or that these differences are unimportant—far from it. And she is not talking about papering over genuine disagreements but about listening to people to see what they are really saying. She quotes Martin Luther King's words about the importance of allowing tensions to surface so differences can be examined and negotiated and concludes that :

> More real progress will be made if education reformers honestly examine the critics' concerns, rather than disregarding them out of hand based on preconceptions about the critics or unquestioning support of the way we do things here. And the critics need to step back and take a hard look at themselves.
>
> These are difficult issues, emotional issues, because they affect the thing dearest to each of us—our children, all children. We must not discount people on either side of the issue because of who they are, because of what religious beliefs they hold, or because of their fears and concerns for their children....
>
> We can improve education and we can ensure a future for our children, but only if we listen with good faith, and reconsider if there are lines and boundaries we have crossed inappropriately.
>
> While we argue, our children are being lost.

Copies of "Voices from the Field" are available from NGA for $18. Call the publications service at 301-498-3738.

Mr. Shanker's comments appear in this ad under the auspices of the American Federation of Teachers. Reader correspondence is invited. Address your letters to Mr. Shanker at the AFT, 555 New Jersey Avenue, N.W., Washington, D.C. 20001. © 1995 by Albert Shanker.

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in the platform fades because we all know that the president, and his ideas and priorities, will be significant, regardless of what the platform said. We know, or quickly learn, the intentions of the presidential candidate. But when a bunch of suits are nominated and elected to Congress, we do not know much about their intentions, individual or collective. So the contract gives an unusual view of what might be expected from a new Congress, and until new evidence appears, the contract must be taken seriously. Let me add that my criticism of the contract should not be read as an endorsement of any utterances of the Clinton administration or of the Democratic Party. The quality of political discourse today is abysmal, from all sides.

The style of the contract makes it difficult to take seriously. It is a good—that is to say terrible—example of late-twentieth-century political rhetoric. There is banality raised to the level of torture, self-congratulation, certitude where only uncertainty is possible, straw myths refuted by fake facts and the inevitable ten—not nine, not eleven—points. Probably the worst of all are the greeting-card names attached to ordinary pieces of legislation: The Fiscal Responsibility Act (budget legislation), The Taking Back Our Streets Act (crime bill), The American Dream Restoration Act (tax reduction bill), The Personal Responsibility Act (welfare reform), The Job Creation and Wage Enhancement Act (more tax reduction) and so on. As Dorothy Parker wrote in a review of a baby-talk book by A.A. Milne: "Tonstant Weader Fwowed Up."

One must, however, try to get through this stylistic slush to the substance. The contract bases itself on five principles: individual liberty, economic opportunity, limited government, personal responsibility and security at home and abroad. I suppose no one in America would reject these principles. Some people might, however, want to add others, such as justice, equality, compassion, community or even culture. The omission of such words is symptomatic of what the contract is about.

Converting any of these principles into guides to policy requires some evaluation of what the real world is like, and what its problems are. For example, seeing the words "personal responsibility" might lead some to think of the responsibility of well-to-do senior citizens to pay for their own medical care, or of the responsibility of a textile mill owner in North Carolina to compete freely with a textile mill in China, or of the responsibility of a farmer in Missouri to protect himself against a Mississippi River flood. When others think of personal responsibility they think first of the responsibility of young women not to have babies that they cannot support. That is, apparently, what comes first to the minds of the authors of the contract.

The contract presents no comprehensive, explicit picture of what it thinks the nation's problems are. But there are a number of clues, and the picture that emerges is something like this:

Most people in the United States are good people, otherwise known as "the middle class." All but about the richest 1 percent and the poorest 15 percent are in the middle class. They work hard, stay with their spouses and rear their children to be like them. If left alone by the government they would prosper and achieve "The American Dream." There are, however, a few people who are not good. These include violent criminals, young women enjoying sex and having illegitimate children, some lawful aliens who are not citizens, and government bureaucrats. For forty years Democratic Congresses have coddled these people and have given them handouts, and this coddling has only increased their number. As a result the middle class has been loaded down with taxes and regulations that have stultified the economy. The American Dream now exceeds their grasp. The great national problem now is to relieve the middle class of these unnecessary burdens.

There is another view of our situation that I find more plausible:

Since 1954, when the Republicans last controlled the House of Representatives, real Gross Domestic Product per capita has doubled, increasing at an annual rate of 1.7 percent. Real personal income after taxes has increased at an annual rate of 2 percent. In the past twenty years, these rates of increase have diminished, in the United States as in other advanced countries. The reasons for this slowdown are largely a mystery, despite efforts of economists to explain it. Increases of taxes and government regulation do not seem to be an important part of the answer. Total federal receipts as a percentage of GDP are now no higher than they were in 1954. Federal receipts other than Social Security contributions are lower than they were relative to the GDP, and although the Social Security contributions are higher they are still not high enough to pay for the benefits that are promised. Federal regulation is less of an interference with the economy than it was—for example with respect to foreign trade and capital movements, financial institutions, agriculture and airline, railroad and truck transportation.

The middle class—say, the middle fifth or the middle three-fifths of the income distribution—has shared in the growth of the economy. Despite the slowdown of the past twenty years, those in the middle class are still better off than their fathers in the 1950s or their grandfathers in the 1920s. Why? Not because they are better, or work harder, or have higher I.Q.s than their parents or grandparents. They are better off—primarily, at least—because they live in a political, economic and social system in which their capacities have been nurtured and can be productively employed.

But still there are problems. The incomes of the poorest people are falling behind the average. This is partly the result of the deterioration of family structure, represented by the increase in the number of families headed by young and economically unproductive women. It is partly a result of a shift in the demand for labor, so that the earnings of the less skilled, even when fully employed, do not rise

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and in many cases decline. The reasons for this are not entirely clear, but it is probably due largely to a technological shift of which the least skilled are the innocent victims, and the most skilled are the innocent beneficiaries.

We also have a serious racial problem. The adverse social and economic conditions are heavily concentrated among blacks. This contributes to hostility and antisocial behavior on the part of blacks and guilt and indifference on the part of whites.

Beyond this, we have a looming budget problem. The problem is not today's deficit, which is equal to about 2.5 percent of the GDP. We can live with that forever or, if we think it desirable to do so, we could reduce that deficit significantly without much stress. But we now have the prospect of the deficit rising enormously, by different estimates to 10 to 20 percent of GDP by the year 2030. Such deficits would exhaust private savings and pose a grave threat to continued economic progress. And these deficits cannot be substantially reduced without impinging on conventional taboos about Social Security, Medicare and taxes.

I lay out this view of our situation at length because it is essential to explain why I am dissatisfied with the contract. I think that the contract is aimed too much at secondary problems and too little at the primary problems—too much at emancipating the middle class, too little at diverting some of the income of today's middle class toward improving the prospects of tomorrow's middle class, as well as toward assisting the least-advantaged, a disproportionately large number of whom are blacks and other minorities.

I will concentrate on the budgetary aspects of the contract because those are the ones with which I am most familiar. But there is more—crime, welfare, defense, a smattering of foreign policy, regulation, term limits. In all of these areas I have the uneasy feeling, even when I agree with what is said, that there is an effort to seduce me by crafty choice of language and by selective presentation of facts.

When it gets down to specifics, the contract starts with The Fiscal Responsibility Act. But the new Republican leadership has already flunked the first and most important test of fiscal responsibility. In the middle of December, the Bipartisan Commission on Entitlement and Tax Reform, chaired by Senators Bob Kerrey and John Danforth, submitted a report. It showed that with present programs the budget deficit would reach an alarming height by 2030, and it presented several packages of measures to correct the situation—all involving hard choices. The chairmen indicated which option they preferred. Almost no other member of the commission was prepared to embrace any solution, however, and the whole venture collapsed. If the new, fiscally responsible leaders of the House had stepped forward to say that the problem was indeed urgent, that difficult choices had to be made, possibly involving Social Security and taxes, and had offered a plan for serious, early congressional action, the outcome might have been different. Instead they said the problem was far off and they had more immediate issues to deal with.

The balanced budget amendment is the centerpiece of the Fiscal Responsibility Act, or, more accurately, it is the curtain behind which the action takes place. I do not like balanced budget amendments for a number of technical reasons having to do with definitions, measurement, implementation and enforcement. The consequence of the amendment would be needless confusion, evasion and litigation. But basically I object to proposals for a balanced budget amendment because they are unfair. It is unfair to ask the American people to sign on to the amendment without telling them what they would be committing themselves to—what combinations of tax increases and expenditure cuts might be required to achieve the balanced budget. The contract does not tell. It refers to Republican plans for cutting spending, but no recent Republican proposal has come close to balancing the budget with specific cuts.

One thing is clear: the contract does not intend to raise taxes. The balanced budget amendment would require a three-fifths vote of Congress to enact a tax increase. The contract says, "And to keep Congress from passing the bill on to you [presumably, the American people] our balanced budget amendment requires a three-fifths majority of Congress to raise taxes." Who there is other than the American people to pay the bill is not explained.

Of course, the contract proposes to balance the budget by cutting spending. But aside from defense, which the contract proposes to increase, and interest, which it cannot cut, more than 80 percent of federal spending consists of payments to individuals—to the American people. The cost for balancing the budget is going to be passed on to the American people whether taxes are raised or expenditures are cut. The only question is which people. Most of the bill is going to be paid by the middle class either way, because they pay most of the taxes and receive most of the benefits. But more will be paid by rich people if taxes are raised and more by poor people if spending is cut. (I realize that it is politically incorrect for conservatives to suggest that there are rich people and poor people in America, but nevertheless, there are.)

Although reticent about the specifics of spending cuts, the contract does spell out a number of tax cuts. There is to be a tax credit for children, increased exclusion of Social Security benefits from taxable income, more tax-deductible IRAs, more credits for small business, more rapid depreciation charges for all business and a fantastically generous reduction of the capital gains tax. Nowhere in the contract is there an estimate of how much this would cost in lost revenue.

The contract deserves much more responsible analysis and debate than it has received up to now. Perhaps it will receive that in the legislative process that now begins, although the prospects for that are not bright.

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The presidency is stronger than you think.

NOT SO FAST, NEWT

By James Patterson

Americans had barely left the polls last November before they were told that they had forged a new world of politics. *Congressional Quarterly* explained, "The electoral meteorite that slammed into the American political landscape November 8 represents the end of an era. The New Deal/cold war period, stretching back to Franklin D. Roosevelt and defining the nation for three generations, now is gone. And the voters have announced that they want their politics to march into the beckoning future and not hark back to the dead past."

Republicans plan to remake Congress so that it illuminates this "beckoning future." Newt Gingrich, like Henry Cabot Lodge in 1919 and Robert Taft in 1947, expects to exploit the apparent popular mandate of his party in order to challenge the president and to establish Congress—and the states—as guiding lights of American government. Indeed, Gingrich talks like a parliamentarian ready to enact an ideological platform. "We are doing real things," he has said. "For the first time in many, many years, there is a political leadership that is doing after the election exactly what we said we were going to do before the election."

Many political developments, both short- and long-term, seem to justify these predictions. Republican members of Congress sit high in the saddle these days, and Gingrich is set to become the most powerful legislative leader in memory. A stroll through American history during this century, however, suggests that the always-tense relationship between the legislative and executive branches will continue, with neither succeeding in establishing supremacy. As in the past, they will have to share power and cooperate, for the Founding Fathers did a remarkably good job of requiring that the two institutions muddle through together.

The results of the 1994 elections appear to support the notion that some aspects of our politics have realigned, and that Congress—at least for the next two years—will be in the catbird seat. Republicans in the House can count several developments that historically have bolstered congressional resolve. One of these is the remarkably high number of relatively new members in the House; more than half of Gingrich's troops have arrived on Capitol Hill since 1992; seventy-three are newcomers. If we can generalize about much of anything in American politics, it is that new majorities are especially likely to hold together in the short run. Not since the post-Watergate babies of 1975—the most recent midterm shift of magnitude—have Americans seen so feisty a group as Gingrich and his spear-carriers. And the class of Watergate Democrats was considerably less united than Republicans (at least in the House) appear to be in 1995.

Longer-term historical trends further the likelihood that Clinton (and subsequent presidents) will face major obstacles to coalition-building on Capitol Hill. Among these is the volatility of voters and the consequent decomposition of partisan loyalties. Indeed, Democrats such as Bob Kerrey, David Boren and Jim Cooper proved almost as troublesome to Clinton during the past two years as Republicans did. These dramatic trends date from the 1890s and the progressive era. Temporarily stemmed by the New Deal, the changes have intensified since the 1950s. The spread of television, enabling individual candidates to run without much need for party support, has further weakened party solidarity. Not since Lyndon Johnson in 1965 (relying heavily on freshman Democrats) has a Democratic president been able to depend on fairly solid partisan backing in Congress.

This is another way of saying that FDR's powerful Democratic electoral coalition, while potent in congressional races for sixty years, has long been ineffective on Capitol Hill. Any notion that a liberal Congress has dominated since 1933 is a myth. Scholars choose different dates to mark its downfall, but we may begin as early as 1938, when Republicans gained eighty House seats. Although they remained a minority, they succeeded in defeating virtually all of FDR's domestic programs. For the remaining six years of his presidency Roosevelt had Democratic majorities in both houses, but lost battle after battle over domestic matters to an informal but determined conservative coalition of Republicans and (mostly) Southern Democrats. The Senate, he sneered in 1945, consisted largely of "a bunch of incompetent obstructionists."

Harry Truman did not fare much better. When

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he outlined his domestic program in September 1945, House Minority Leader Joseph Martin of Massachusetts exclaimed, "Not even President Roosevelt ever asked so much at one sitting. It is just a case of out-New Dealing the New Deal." Truman stayed on the defensive over a range of economic and labor issues in 1946, and he was strongly repudiated in the elections that fall. The president did not make a single political speech during the campaign, and Republicans gained fifty-five seats in the House and thirteen in the Senate to take control of Capitol Hill for the first time since 1930. Senator J. William Fulbright of Arkansas, a Democrat, went so far as to suggest after the election that Truman name a Republican as secretary of state and then resign so that the new secretary could take over. (That was the line of presidential succession at the time.) Truman ignored the suggestion, dismissing his critic as "Senator Halfbright." But, in the forthcoming Congress he took a battering from Republican partisans determined (like Gingrich today) to rechart the agenda of American domestic policy. The GOP overrode a presidential veto to pass the Taft-Hartley Act and three times approved a tax cut before producing one that also prevailed over Truman's veto. Even after Democrats reclaimed control of Congress in 1949—gaining seventy-five members in the House (the highest increase for the party in this century) and nine in the Senate—the conservative coalition still ruled. Aside from a housing bill approved in 1949, Truman's liberal agenda did not triumph.

Not much had changed by 1961, when the Democrats regained control of the presidency. House Democratic leaders managed to pack the Rules Committee, a core of conservative strength in the House, but otherwise struggled ineffectually during the Kennedy years. A federal aid to education bill failed in the new committee, as did President Kennedy's effort to establish a new Cabinet department of urban affairs. Lyndon Johnson labored mightily to resuscitate a liberal coalition, which enjoyed a splendid last hurrah on Capitol Hill in 1965. At that time Democrats controlled the House 295 to 140, and the Senate sixty-eight to thirty-two. But LBJ made a fateful choice: backing civil rights legislation in full knowledge that in time his stand was likely to destroy Democratic hegemony in the South. What he did not so clearly recognize was the extraordinary political impact of racial confrontation elsewhere in the nation. George Wallace did understand, as did Richard Nixon and many other Republicans. House GOP leader Gerald Ford asked in 1966, "How long are we going to abdicate law and order—the backbone of our civilization—in favor of a soft social theory that the man who heaves a brick through your window or tosses a fire bomb into your car is simply the misunderstood and underprivileged product of a broken home?" Conflicts over racially charged issues helped Republicans gain forty-seven House seats in the pivotal 1966 elections. Thereafter these and other issues shattered Democratic Party unity and ushered in an era of successful congressional resistance to liberal Democratic programs that persists to this day. What is surprising is how long it took the trend toward independent voting and party decomposition to overturn Democratic control of the House.

The end of the cold war has further weakened presidents vis-à-vis Congress. All presidents from Truman through Ronald Reagan rallied congressional support by raising the specter of international communism. Truman, while assailing the "do-nothing" Republican Congress of 1947-48, secured major foreign policy measures from it, including financing for the Truman Doctrine and the Marshall Plan, backing in principle for the formation of NATO, and creation of the Defense Department and the CIA. In 1955 a Democratic Congress overwhelmingly approved the Formosa Resolution, which gave President Dwight D. Eisenhower a blank check in formulating military responses against China. In 1964 Congress approved the Tonkin Gulf Resolution unanimously in the House and with only two dissenting votes in the Senate.

During these especially anxious cold war years, liberals virtually fell over one another in celebration of the potential of the presidency. Without bold leadership from 1600 Pennsylvania Avenue, they said, the world might fall to communism. Theodore White in *The Making of the President 1960* spoke reverently of the "hush, an entirely personal hush" that surrounded presidential decisions concerning foreign affairs. The hush, he added, "was deepest in the Oval Office of the West Wing of the White House, where the president, however many his advisers, must sit alone."

By the late 1960s a few doubters, including Fulbright, tried to restore a significant congressional voice in foreign affairs, but this effort faltered in the cold war era. Indeed, Fulbright himself had been ready to surrender congressional authority. "For the existing requirements of American foreign policy," he said in 1961, "we have hobbled the president by too niggardly a grant of power." Senator Barry Goldwater agreed from the right. "The Constitution," he said in 1964, "gives the president, not the Congress, the primary war-making powers." There was "no question," he added, "that the president can take military action at any time he feels danger for the country."

The power of the presidency in foreign policy matters flourished even during the later years of the Vietnam War. Worried about America's economic standing in the world, the Democratic Congress in 1970 passed an Economic Stabilization Act that conferred extraordinary powers on President Nixon. The Congress trod with special care after Nixon's huge victory in 1972. Representative Carl Vinson of Georgia, a Democrat, grumbled in 1973 that the role of Congress "has come to be that of a somewhat querulous but essentially kindly uncle who complains while furiously puffing on his pipe but who finally, as everyone

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expects, gives in and hands over the allowance, grants the permission or raises his hand in blessing, and then returns to his rocking chair for another year of somnolence broken only by an occasional anxious glance down the avenue and a muttered doubt as to whether he had done the right thing."

The Imperial Presidency had become so well-entrenched by then that Democrats shrank at first from the idea of setting an impeachment process in motion. Among other things, they feared for the reputation of Congress if they attacked such a formidable institution as the presidency. In the end, of course, they acted, defying King Richard and greatly enhancing the visibility and prestige of the House, which had previously worked in the shadow of the Senate. With the vital aid of the Supreme Court, Congress began to puncture the mystique of the omnipotent executive, which had swollen to overblown proportions amid the tensions of the cold war.

Still, as long as the Soviets were perceived as a threat, the presidency remained a formidable institution. Americans denounced Washington—this was Jimmy Carter's message—but they still seemed to yearn for purposeful executive leadership. In the power vacuum following Nixon's resignation, James Reston identified this feeling by observing, "The White House is the pulpit of the nation, and the president is its chaplain." As if to prove the point, various presidents successfully ignored the War Powers Resolution that Congress had passed in 1973, over President Nixon's veto, to curb presidential adventurism abroad: Ford in 1975 sent troops into combat following the seizure by Cambodia of the American freighter *Mayaguez*, and subsequent presidents also flouted the resolution. The popularity of Ronald Reagan, as well as the wave of adulation that followed George Bush's decisive actions in the Gulf war, testify to the persistent popular yearning for bold presidential leadership.

The point, of course, is that the end of the cold war has curbed the ability of presidents to arouse this yearning, thereby tilting the balance of power toward Congress. President Clinton, stripped of the electoral coalition that had elevated FDR and elected Truman, cannot seek refuge behind the American flag. Instead, he confronts a different kind of yearning—that he do something to solve formidable social problems at home. This has always been a demanding assignment. From this perspective, Clinton (and his successors) seem more fated than ever to encounter frustrations on Capitol Hill, whatever party may control it.

This is but one perspective, however. To recite the long history of congressional resistance to presidential authority is not necessarily to conclude that Congress will permanently eclipse the White House or that special circumstances cannot revive the presidency.

It is in fact unlikely that Gingrich and his allies will be able to impose legislative supremacy on the nation. For one thing, they do not seem much interested in doing so in an institutional sense. They are reducing the number of committees and restricting terms of committee chairs. If they succeed in imposing term limits on themselves, they will deprive Congress of the experienced people—and the institutional memories—that have helped to empower the House and the Senate. If they enact a law authorizing a line-item veto for the president, they may surrender a measure of control over the appropriations process. What the Republicans appear to want is not a move toward legislative domination; rather, they seek to downsize the federal government and augment the authority of the states.

It is equally unlikely that Congress can change another reality of life on the Hill: the power of special-interest groups. These, too, have a lengthy past, as anyone who read textbook accounts of the robber barons will remember. The proliferation of such groups expanded in the 1930s, when the New Deal finally turned the federal government into a source of benefits and entitlements; during World War II, when Washington exploded in size and power; and fantastically during the 1960s, when the war in Vietnam swelled the military-industrial complex and the Great Society increased the reach of the State. The growth of interest-group government has subjected Congress as an institution to fearsome public criticism. Nothing in the political history of the past century suggests that these interest groups will lose influence or that Congress as an institution can curb them in ways that will enhance its public reputation.

Recent history indicates that the power of the media, too, will persist and grow. Because it is much easier for reporters to cover a president than it is to follow 535 legislators, and because White House-watching has become a national sport, we may expect a continuing focus on everything that happens at 1600 Pennsylvania Avenue—sometimes to a president's advantage, sometimes not. But the media have also been casting an increasingly critical eye on Congress, helping to give it an image that since the 1970s has become even less flattering than that of the presidency. And television-driven congressional campaigns seem likely to incite even heavier mud-slinging than that which plastered so many candidates in 1994. So long as television cameras crowd the halls of Capitol Hill we may expect to watch Congress, like the president, get cut down to size as an institution.

Can Gingrich, an unusually purposeful leader, restore some congressional influence? Surely, for the unity of his party is indeed unusual. Clinton has already yielded some control of his agenda by caving in and calling for tax cuts that mimic Gingrich's Contract with America. But Gingrich will face formidable constraints. As in the past, the House and the Senate often will go their separate ways. Senate Democrats have the numbers to filibuster against especially objectionable proposals. Individual representatives and senators, elected in highly personal campaigns, will continue to resist party discipline when constituent pressures inter-

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vene. And Gingrich's special mandate may not last long. Ever since Speaker Joe Cannon was stripped of his dictatorial powers by angry colleagues in 1910, senior committee chairs have dominated legislative proceedings. President Woodrow Wilson complained that America had a "government by the standing committees of Congress." Some speakers—Nicholas Longworth in the 1920s, Sam Rayburn in the 1940s and 1950s, Jim Wright in the 1980s—have managed to exert substantial personal influence. So have Senate Majority Leaders Joseph Robinson in the 1930s and Lyndon Johnson in the 1950s. Robert Taft may have been the most influential of all—he and his GOP colleagues managed to enact their own legislation. But these are exceptions to a pattern of congressional leadership that has been dispersed since 1910 and that has if anything grown still more decentralized since the 1950s. The major bursts of domestic legislation in modern American history have come in the early 1930s and the mid-1960s and have emanated from the White House. The House speakers during both periods played small roles in this process. Robinson, the Senate majority leader until 1937, did much to aid Roosevelt's efforts, but Mike Mansfield, Democratic leader in the mid-1960s, mainly carried out executive decisions. And these were eras of Democratic control of both the White House and Capitol Hill. No modern president who has faced opposition majorities in Congress has rolled over in submission. It would be a remarkable first if Clinton does so.

Reports of the demise of an active, effective presidency are also premature. Have we forgotten already the extraordinary boost that Reagan gave to the prestige of the institution before the Iran-contra scandals? Or his success in setting a new domestic agenda that affects us still? The history of executive-congressional relations since the 1930s indicates that special *political* climates largely determine a president's ability to dominate Congress. These climates have appeared twice during this era—in the 1930s, when economic catastrophe produced widespread popular demands for presidential leadership, and in the 1960s, when (conversely) a booming economy helped to foster near-utopian notions that the State could design a new age of economic opportunity. Roosevelt and Johnson, savvy and dynamic leaders, seized the day. There are no significant new *institutional* developments that stand in the way of effective presidential leadership if and when favorable political climates of this sort reappear.

No one would be foolhardy enough to imagine such a reappearance in the next two years. The short run will favor Gingrich, as earlier tidal waves in off-year elections favored Lodge and Taft. Still, the election of 1994 did not reveal major changes in party identification or political ideology. Voters rejected only two incumbent Democratic senators. Although Americans clearly rebuked the Washington political establishment, they did not make it clear that they will accept specific GOP programs. Indeed, nearly three-quarters of voters never heard of Gingrich's Contract with America. Given the volatility of the American electorate, voters can surprise us at any time, maybe even in 1996.

There remains, finally, a reservoir of popular yearning for effective presidential leadership. The events of the past century—and particularly of the years since 1932—have focused ever-rising attention on the White House. Chief among these developments have been the expansion of the national security state and the rise of ever-more complex domestic problems. These have seemed to demand a large administrative apparatus centered in the executive branch. The attention given to the White House, all the more riveting in the mass media age, will not diminish. It is often a president's worst enemy, since it accentuates the already large expectations that Americans have developed about leadership since the 1930s. Excepting Eisenhower and Reagan—presidents who did not promise much in the way of new domestic programs—no modern president has managed for long to satisfy these expectations, let alone to build a popular mandate for domestic legislation. And LBJ, who did so manage in the short run, promised far more than he could deliver, thus unleashing devastating recriminations on himself and his party.

We have lived since then amid these recriminations. The gap between popular expectations and the perception of government performance, especially powerful since 1966, continues to be a central reality of American politics. Polls since then have shown that the American people do not trust their leaders. This disenchantment seems unlikely to change, at least in the near future, for it rests in part on a distrust of the State that has deep historical roots. Moreover, many of the expectations are excessive. The federal government cannot do much—at least not quickly—about social problems such as crime, illegitimacy and drug abuse. It does not know how to promote economic growth, which has languished for twenty years. Loud dissatisfaction about the performance of the federal government—aimed at the president as well as Democratic members of the House—inspired the reaction of last November and has aroused the aspirations of Gingrich and others who would resuscitate the states.

It is doubtful, however, that these dissatisfactions have weakened the institutional power of the presidency vis-à-vis that of the legislative branch. The voters in 1994, after all, took aim not only at the Clinton administration but also at Congress, whose reputation has suffered in recent years. Clinton himself, never popular with the electorate, may not survive in office beyond 1996. But, Americans are likely to blame him personally and Congress, not the institution of the presidency, for whatever deadlock lies in store. However jaded the voters may have sounded in 1994, many will continue to hope in their hearts that a strong president will succeed in curbing the deadlock. •

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BOOKS & The Arts

Stanley Kauffmann on Films

Early Winter Roundup

Tom and Viv (Miramax). That is, T. S. Eliot and his first wife, Vivien. This is the second film in recent months about a famous writer, after *Mrs. Parker and the Vicious Circle*, and it proves yet again the usual innate contradiction of such pictures. For the viewer who knows the writer's life and work, the film's attempt to show connections between the two is bound to seem feeble. ("Properly speaking," William Logan wrote lately, "a poet doesn't have a life.... His actual life is ... in language. The biography of the art is never the biography of the body.") And for the viewer who doesn't know the writer's work, the story, sheerly as film experience, doesn't often come to much.

Others have noted the biographical slips in this screenplay derived from Michael Hastings's play. Slips and all, what we get is another story of an unbalanced wife and her patient but finally frazzled husband, of the love between them that never disappears but finally has to bow to circumstances. We see that the wife comes from an upper-class English family, and we're told that she is something of a writer. We see that the husband is an American who meets his wife at Oxford in 1915, and we're told that eventually he becomes a celebrated poet. We can't really see him being a poet; his wife's erratic conduct is embarrassing to him as a banker and publisher, not as a poet.

Miranda Richardson does what she can with Viv, but it all rings disconcertingly familiar—another movie madwoman in a line that includes performances by Jean Simmons, Olivia de Havilland and many others. Willem Dafoe is merely baffled by Tom, but then who wouldn't be? How does one play T. S. Eliot? Or Rod McKuen, for that matter? The one telling performance is by Rosemary Harris as Viv's mother. Harris (coming to look, in the course of time, something like Christopher Plummer) is the matriarch of a class-conscious family who, through pain and compassion, expands her ethos to accommodate experience for which that ethos has not provided.

Speechless (MGM) Aren't Mary Matalin and James Carville sufficient unto the day? Did we need a film suggested by their story? Some have thought so. Hence a screenplay by Robert King, painstakingly—if not painfully—modeled on madcap comedies of the 1930s, about a pair of political speechwriters. He (Michael Keaton) and she (Geena Davis) work for rival senatorial candidates in New Mexico. They meet cute, they court cute, they copulate cute. Then comes the break between them, and then the healing.

We've been told that 53 percent of the American electorate didn't vote in 1994. This picture does its best to show that the 53 percent were right. If fiction and documentary hadn't previously made the point, *Speechless* underscores the fact that election campaigns are just advertising campaigns for candidates instead of detergents. The payoff of the picture is that, after a scandal is uncovered about one of the candidates, it's revealed that the other candidate also was bribed by the same tycoon, who wanted to cover his bets. Actual political beliefs are so rare that, when Davis admits she has some, she is urged to run for office.

Keaton seems at first a shade too old for the brisk, brash fellow he plays. Then we see that it isn't Keaton who is too old, it's this kind of comedy. It's dated. Cary Grant was being engagingly lightweight when he was older than Keaton is now, but that was in another time when cuteness seemed daring. Now it seems corny. (Which is why some of the so-called classic 1930s comedies are now unbearably arch.) Davis is more comfortable than Keaton; she needs less strain to prove her bounce. She also seems to have secret chuckles, which give her some perspective on the whole enterprise.

Nell (20th Century Fox). A lot of serious ink already has been spilled about this picture, and more will follow. But the basic reason for its existence is not humane concern: it is to give Jodie Foster a knockout part. I'd guess that one day Foster and her colleagues were sitting around the conference room of her production company, considering career moves among the many different offers. "Wait a minute!" exclaimed Foster or one of her chums. "Here's an *impaired* person!" That settled it.

Occasionally a film about an impaired person is worthwhile for more than histrionic reasons. In *My Left Foot* Daniel Day-Lewis really plumbed the heroism of trying to live an ordinary life under severe physical handicap. But with most such films, we continually see the light at the end of the actor's tunnel, and that light is the gleam of an Oscar.

FILMS WORTH SEEING

Colonel Chabert. *Gérard Depardieu is hewn out of rock in this Balzac tale of an unexpected survivor of a Napoleonic battle. Deft and bitter. (Reviewed 12/26/94)* **Nobody's Fool.** *Paul Newman's presence holds together this exploration of small-town life. Some ultimate plotting, but best when it sticks to dailiness. (1/9/95)* **Red.** *Its quiet tensions, implied passions and hints of violence suggest Chabrol, but it's by Krzysztof Kieslowski. It deals centrally with a young woman and a retired judge. (12/19/94)* **Vanya on 42nd Street.** *American acting of Chekhov at its finest. A group of actors gathers in an abandoned theater for a run-through of "Uncle Vanya." A treasure. (11/7/94)*—**SK**

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Here Foster is a North Carolina wild girl, Nell, who lives in a mountain cabin. She was brought up by her eremitic mother, now dead, who was facially paralyzed; so Foster learned to speak like a person without full control of mouth and tongue and is incomprehensible to those unwilling to study her. She is a fey creature, running through the woods, living an inner fantasy life. When, with grim Movieland inevitability, her innocence is discovered by randy adolescents in the nearest town, she responds with innocent playfulness. Her case, when it becomes one in a law court, pits the strictures of forensic medicine against a woodland spirit. Her advocates contend that she is educable; but in an epilogue five years later, she doesn't utter a word.

Liam Neeson and Natasha Richardson are used as supporting actors—that is, stooges—for Foster. Neeson (one of the most attractive and talented of his generation) is a country doctor who gives up his practice for a month just so that he can live in a tent near Nell's cabin and observe her. Richardson is a state psychologist who arrives in a luxe houseboat that she moors in the lake beneath the cabin so that she, too, can observe Nell. The contrived actions by these two people only emphasize that the picture is designed as a Foster vehicle.

As Nell, Foster does no worse than most other actresses might who have her limitations of feature, voice and movement. What she lacks, however, to use a term appropriate to this contrived venture, is star quality.

A Man of No Importance (Sony Classics). Albert Finney, long-proven a splendid actor, plays a Dublin bus driver with a passion for Oscar Wilde's writings. Every morning he recites Wilde to his passengers, who love it. Michael Gambon, another exceptional talent, plays a local butcher with a crush on Finney's sister. This quaint tale centers on Finney's attempt to produce *Salome* and his attempt, through his mimicking of Wilde, at homosexuality.

The screenplay by Barry Devlin is unrelievedly soppy, and Suri Krishnamma's directing fits it. Throughout the picture I nursed the hope that Finney and Gambon were drunk while they were making it, which would explain their blowzy performances. I hope, too, that they were drunk when they accepted these roles.

Camilla (Miramax). Jessica Tandy's last film. Out of respect for her long and lovely career, no further comment on *Camilla.* •

Jed Perl on Art

Shrieks

You hear the Bruce Nauman show almost before you see it, because the cries and the commands that provide the audio component for some of the artist's videos are so loud that they cut straight through the galleries to the entrance of the exhibition. Coming off the escalator onto the second floor of the Hirshhorn Museum in Washington, where the retrospective of this 53-year-old artist is up until the end of January, unsuspecting museumgoers may wonder if something awful is going on in the galleries, but for visitors who know the Nauman routine, this is just business as usual. The works with soundtracks include *Clown Torture,* in which a man in a clown costume keeps saying "no," and *Shit in Your Hat—Head on a Chair,* in which an off-camera voice puts the mime on the video through a series of hard-to-follow, repetitive movements. Noise in a museum is by no means Nauman's invention, but like silence on a concert stage, that other rather shopworn experimental ploy, it's a break with convention that's still fairly certain to put the audience on tenterhooks. That, no doubt about it, is where Nauman wants us.

Nauman has dealt with lots of big topics—sex, power, violence—and he has dealt with them impersonally, as media-grabbers, as contemporary flash points. If you compare a large-scale Nauman with a large-scale Donald Judd or Mark di Suvero or Nam June Paik—artists who were all very much on the scene in the late 1960s—you see that Nauman's overwhelming statements are anti-grand grand gestures. There's no personal fervor to Nauman's megalomania. The show is wildly heterogeneous: there are movies, holograms, videos and pieces ranging from bantam weight to behemoth-size, made of wax, neon, cast iron, aluminum, wallboard, two-by-fours, Plexiglas, steel and foam. Yet the net

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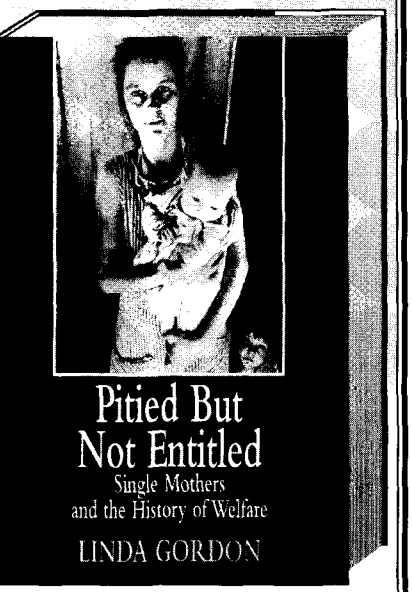

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effect is curiously tamped-down—a muffled shriek. This is messagey art, but the messages don't exactly get across, which is (of course) the message. The queasy ambiguity has sent Nauman's reputation—he's been very well known for a quarter-century—through the roof in the past half-decade or so.

The Nauman retrospective, which was organized by the Walker Art Center in Minneapolis and was seen there last spring, makes its next stop at the Museum of Modern Art in New York this spring. During the thirty-year period that is surveyed, Nauman has made use of lots of new or newish media, but he's always used them offhandedly, as if they were all old hat. He has become a renegade superstar hero for younger artists such as Cady Noland, Kiki Smith and Jessica Stockholder, who see the art of the 1960s and 1970s as their image bank, their junk pile. It's possible to understand Nauman as one of the first avant-garde artists who has been indifferent to style. He wants to prove that the next style is not the better style, and he wants to make that point while he's doing the latest thing. Most of Nauman's work looks reheated, intentionally so. He regards Minimalism, Body Art, Environmental Art as the same stuff in different packages. And he's right. This is avant-gardism for the microwave generation.

Bruce Nauman gets us nervous and twitchy and ill at ease—that's the main thing. In some of the earliest work included in this show, he films himself putting on theatrical makeup and photographs himself playing with his toes, and we're left with the feeling that we've invaded his privacy. In a lot of the later work—the torture videos, the neon drawings of erect penises, the neon signs that tell us that we're going to "FUCK AND DIE"—it's easy to feel that Nauman has invaded our privacy. The environmental works consisting of oddly shaped passageways and rooms are meant to disorient us. I presume that the recent assemblages made of animal casts that Nauman purchases from a taxidermy supply house are supposed to put us off. And yet a lot of the time Nauman does not, so far as I am concerned, exactly succeed in unnerving us. Maybe he doesn't care about that, either. Certainly, it's impossible to sink into Nauman's work or feel overtaken by it. In the course of the show, museumgoers have to adjust to so many different media, and to so many oddly mixed media, that they may never get to the point where they're having anything but first impressions.

Nauman gave himself the starring role in the photographic work that he was doing in the late 1960s, and only here, at the beginning of the show, does he manage to make us feel a bit emotionally involved. At 26 or 27, the age at which he did the *Art Make-Up* movies and the *Hologram Series*, Nauman had the slender build, pleasingly shaped shoulders and slightly masklike face of a sixth-century kouros figure. He was not wildly good-looking, but it is a time in life when moderately attractive people can look wildly goodlooking, and Nauman's imperturbable, unto-myself manner—that youthful self-absorption—was part of his college-bohemian charm.

Courtesy The Heithoff Family Collection

SELF-PORTRAIT AS A FOUNTAIN, BY BRUCE NAUMAN, 1966-1967

In *Art Make-Up*, Nauman, barechested, slowly plasters thick opaque makeup on his face in four tones—white, pink, green and black. Although I can't imagine watching this quartet of films for more than a few minutes, Nauman is an interesting camera subject, nobody is forced to stay any longer than they care to and his narcissistic self-absorption does have some humor and appeal. The same goes for the *Holograms*, with their outerspace red depths in which Nauman, wearing a striped shirt and jeans, scrunches up his body, tweaks his nose, tickles his toes. He's enjoying his own body—this is innocent, nongenital masturbation—and I can see the appeal of these kooky intimate scenes.

In these first works, Nauman is the kouros as bohemian clown. In a few other videos, although his peregrinations around his empty studio are already too deep into neo-Beckettland for my taste, I can appreciate his flat demeanor and the no-style stylishness of his standard-issue T-shirts. And I do not think it is amiss to see a hint of sexiness in his bare feet in *Dance or Exercise on the Perimeter of a Square*; Nauman probably imagined that he could turn on half the world by taking off his shoes, and perhaps he wasn't far from wrong. *Neon Templates of the Left Half of My Body Taken at Ten-Inch Intervals* makes me stop and look and think. When Nauman distills his own body into icy green neon curves, one can grant him the ingenuity of using minimalism as the stealth weapon of an erotic sneak. But this isn't anything that deserves a six-city museum tour, and after the first group of works the show collapses. The youthful quiet egotist who wants to grab our attention becomes a middle-aged raving egotist. We're on the receiving end of a mixed-media mugging.

The show is a sprawling, chilly experience. It's easy just to walk by Nauman's nothingish drawings, but there are works that, by virtue of their size alone, can hardly be avoided, even when you're mostly looking for the way out. *South America Triangle* is one of a number of pieces that hang from the ceiling: a cast iron chair hovers in the center of a minimalist triangle of steel beams. *One Hundred Live and Die* is a wall of neon lettering, with messages flashing on and flashing off, among them "PISS AND DIE/PISS AND LIVE." Neon color, which can be magic in the darkness of a city, looks like nothing in a well-lit gallery, but then for Nauman no-thing is a metaphor. There's a series of silhouetted figures done in neon that recall the sleekly anonymous ones that made Ernest Trova famous in the 1960s, only in place of Trova's space-age androgyny Nauman gives us jumbo-size penises that flash erect and then flash limp and then erect and then limp.

Nauman is almost as attached to repetition as he is to inconsistency. If inconsistency represents the self-indulgently experimental side of his personality, repetition is apparently the only way he

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thinks he can get anything through our thick skulls. The museum is a lab. The artworks are the lab equipment. Nauman experiments on us, and if we aren't quite sure that this is what he has in mind, he includes a rat bumbling through a maze. On a video projection, the rat makes its way through its orange Plexiglas labyrinth while a young man thumps on a drum set; the work, called *Learned Helplessness in Rats (Rock and Roll Drummer)*, also includes the maze (without the rat). In installations such as *Corridor Installation (Nick Wilder Installation)* and *Yellow Room (Triangular)*, Nauman is testing our reactions to unfamiliar spaces, so we become the rats who are put through the maze. And then, like a lot of lab animals, we end up in the morgue, which Nauman suggests with his heaps of cast animal carcasses and his casts of decapitated human heads—many of them—in a variety of Crayola colors.

There is nothing that can be said against Nauman that hasn't already been said in his favor. Peter Schjeldahl, whose elegantly written columns in *The Village Voice* are our most reliable guide to what the art-world fast set is thinking, says that Nauman's gift "consists in observing and being true to a 'failure to communicate' built into every language, every style." That may be a savvy way of describing the sense of drift that a Nauman show induces, but isn't it something like the ultimate cop-out to say that an artist's failure to communicate is actually his way of communicating?

Less is more may be one of the great high modernist revelations, but it does not contravene the fact that what you see is what you get and that what you get in Nauman is nothing much. Schjeldahl says that Nauman creates art that "cannot be handed down as a tradition." It seems to me that Nauman's real achievement is to have persuaded the public that he operates in a universe where neither the high art traditions nor the most rudimentary standards of popular entertainment ever come into play. Nauman's oddly shaped walk-in environments provoke a mild, rather metaphorical sense of claustrophobia, which will not impress anybody who has encountered the Mannerist gardens and interiors that were being constructed in Europe 450 years ago. And what can the average museumgoer, who takes the technical wizardry of MTV for granted, possibly make of the shoddy production values in Nauman's videos? Somebody is sure to explain that Nauman's home-video ineptness is his 1960s version of old-modern primitivism. It seems that whenever historical precedents are invoked in support of late-twentieth-century experimentation, it is in order to intimidate the audience, to shut people up. Once upon a time artists challenged conventional beliefs. Now some of them just want the audience to suspend judgment.

This is Nauman's first major museum show in the United States since 1972, and although he has never been out of the public eye, the timing is impeccable for a man who is now seen as the middle-aged dad of a new mixed-media generation. Nauman's anti-aesthetic is taught in the art schools. So are his marketing strategies. Although this has never been the kind of work that most upscale collectors were going to put in their homes, the market-proof look of a lot of Nauman's pieces can be a selling point among the museums and foundations and blue-chip collectors that pride themselves on going where the business-as-usual art world fears to go. In the 1980s, when collectors were betting serious money on new painting, experts might dismiss the whole mixed-media bag as a leftover from the self-righteous 1960s. But, since the early 1990s, the market has been in the doldrums, and galleries that can't sell paintings anyway have been more inclined to give precious show slots to work that is practically unsellable. At least the dealers can feel virtuous while they're surveying the red ink.

Nauman's marketing skills are relevant to our experience of his work. When the pieces that are on display are as no-dimensional as most of Nauman's, the question that ends up sticking in our minds is why people allow him to bore them on this truly staggering scale. Our aging youth culture likes artists who survive their youth without ever growing up, and in middle age Nauman has a knack for making his helter-skelter productions look like a consistent development, even if it's sometimes only in a consistently inconsistent way. He understands that the chamber-scale sexual sensationalism in his early work, which included a video of his own genitals smeared with black pigment, looks visionary a quarter-century later, when law enforcement officials in California are allowed to photograph a pop star's private parts, and a New York City tabloid prints a photograph of the knife that a woman used to cut off her husband's penis. The hard-edged view of sex and violence that we get in Nauman's more recent work is as emotionally dissociated as what we're seeing on the talk shows and the celebrity trials on television. A Nauman show is just artsy pay-per-view T.V.

Visitors will most likely leave the retrospective thinking about Nauman's videos of a tortured clown and a tormented mime. Nauman has been dressing up actors in these generic costumes since the late 1980s—they're the most recent rats to be run through his maze. In an interview in the magazine *Parkett*, he referred to such costumes as masks behind which "there's something you don't know and you're never going to find out." But Nauman's theatrical folk are so much the passive figures—even when they're howling at us—that their costumes register less as masks than as straitjackets. *Clown Torture*, which Schjeldahl has described as a "masterpiece" that "pries open a big, scary contemporary sublime," is a six-screen video show in which we see an actor in a clown costume sitting on a toilet, getting bonked on the head by a pail of water, reciting a tongue twister that begins "Pete and Repeat were sitting on a fence," and saying "No" over and over again. There's no mystery to this clown; he's just Nauman's vision of the wretched of the earth as a robotic kitsch puppet. In *Shit in Your Hat—Head on a Chair*, the puppet is a female mime and the oppressor is heard but not seen. The pathetic mime goes through her paces—a series of tortuous bends and movements—in response to the droning off-screen commands of a male voice that orders her to "Put your hat on the table. Put your head on your hat. Put your hand on your head with your head on your hat. . . ."

Nauman wants us to know that his videos of confinement and torment are a response to recent political events. In 1981 he read Jacobo Timerman's *Prisoner Without a Name, Cell Without a Number* and it made a big impression. Yet Nauman's torture videos are such a fashion-conscious mix of minimalism and kitsch that it seems a little silly to imagine that they're going to help us connect with the nightmare of life under a totalitarian regime. Nauman shows no interest in the victims in his videos. There are no nuances to his representations of the oppressor or the oppressed, and he doesn't get at what goes on between them. These videos are startling, but they are essentially inert. Nauman doesn't create a work of art that has complex internal dynamics. Perhaps he doesn't intend to. But he does expect us to have all kinds of complicated reactions. We're supposed to take his shock treatment and transform it into an artistic experience. No wonder critics like to dig in.

I have no idea whether the psychopathology that rages through Nauman's recent work is a put-on, a mid-career strategy, or straight from the heart. Frankly, I don't care. What's extraordinary isn't that Nauman shrieks, but that people listen. His relationship

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with the museum world is pure S&M. The museums invite him in and he lets them have it. He's a control freak—he hurls neon thunderbolts, builds detention chambers, shouts commands. Since the museums keep coming back for more, one has to assume that the people who make the decisions are getting exactly what they want. In the get-tough 1990s, Nauman is the Now Man. •

Beijing Blues

By Andrew J. Nathan

China Wakes: The Struggle for the Soul of a Rising Power by Nicholas D. Kristof and Sheryl WuDunn

(Times Books, 501 pp., $25)

Mandate of Heaven: A New Generation of Entrepreneurs, Dissidents, Bohemians, and Technocrats Lays Claim to China's Future by Orville Schell

(Simon & Schuster, 464 pp., $25)

The West alternates between seeing China as weak and friendly and fearing it as strong and dangerous. The notion of China as a threat was revived after Tiananmen, and today it is nourished by Beijing's upgrading of its navy and air force, its sales of arms around the world and its assertiveness in making territorial claims to parts of the South China Sea. China-threat theory is congenial to the defense bureaucracy, to American industries threatened by Chinese exports and to some sections of the labor movement. It is sure to get loud and frequent airings in Jesse Helms's Foreign Relations Committee.

These two books should usefully complicate the debate. They portray China as booming and collapsing at the same time. Orville Schell, our most durable China observer, describes the events that he witnessed in Tiananmen Square in 1989, the desolate aftermath, the economic boom since 1992, and its puzzling accompaniment of "heterodox ideas, weird fads, errant cultural tendencies and unorthodox economic hustles." Nicholas Kristof and Sheryl WuDunn, the energetic husband-and-wife team who won a Pulitzer Prize for their reporting in *The New York Times*, write about their five-year tour of duty, marked by economic dynamism and continuing political repression.

Of course, we have heard about China waking before, during the reforms of the late Qing in 1900-1910 and the Kuomintang revival of the 1930s—episodes that scholars often compare to Deng Xiaoping's reforms—and during the early years of Mao's reign. In each episode, political wreck brought economic ruin. On the whole, both books give more testimony against a brilliant future for China than in favor. If Deng's regime is a collapsing dynasty, a monarchical metaphor that both books use, then China should face several more decades of chaos and poverty before it can make another attempt to fulfill its potential as a world power.

On the other hand, powerful forces are pushing China toward "peaceful evolution," which is what Chinese reformers want, and what Chinese conservatives fear. Economic reform is ushering in the rule of law; modernization is creating social pluralism; prosperity encourages the assertion of individual interest; and the coming political succession is likely to expose the need to find a new basis for legitimizing the regime. And yet, as the political scientist Adam Przeworski has argued, liberalization never saved a dictatorship. In Eastern Europe and Latin America, liberalization was always a way station to popular mobilization followed by renewed repression, or to authentic democratization. China has already had the former experience, and it could have it again. Or it could democratize.

Both books trace the current Chinese boom to Deng's "talks on a Southern tour" in early 1992. During visits to Shanghai and the Special Economic Zones, Deng made a series of pronouncements, among them, "Only development is hard logic," "Anyone who doesn't reform can get out of office," and "Policies are good if they are good for liberating the socialist productive forces, increasing the comprehensive power of the socialist state and raising the people's living standards." These slogans became the mantras of provincial officials and enterprise managers in their race for growth.

Twelve percent growth has brought goods to the markets, construction cranes to the streets and tales of giddy achievement to the official press. The numbers are real, if rough; but much of what they measure is fake. Some state enterprises consist of waste piles of spoiled goods surrounded by subsidized workers on permanent smoking break, but the output, jobs and cigarettes increase the respective national numbers. Pirated C.D.s, counterfeit jeans and poisoned medications count in production statistics. Investment capital that flows into the country is tallied, but capital flight is not. The economy is bloated with unrecoverable state-bank loans, "triangle debts" among enterprises and their suppliers, and "black" and "gray" speculative capital.

Some Chinese economists believe that, as one of them told me, "those who think Russia is in worse shape than China are wrong. We have a larger population, a lower ratio of industrial to agricultural employment, weaker institutions of macroeconomic control and fewer social-welfare programs. After forty-five years of socialism, we still need to industrialize." China has been industrializing for a long time, but the task only gets more pressing. Mao's policy of breakthrough modernization, which was inaugurated in the 1950s, left the peasants to raise themselves by their bootstraps while putting state resources into large factories. This gave China a big industrial sector, but it left 80 percent of the population living on the land in poverty. Deng's reforms in the late 1970s and early 1980s freed the peasants from the collectives in order to raise rural living standards. This brought brick homes and television sets to the villages, but it also meant diminishing returns once the land was made as productive as possible under the given technology.

Today Chinese reformers believe that neither strategy any longer meets China's needs. One told me, "Now we see the problem in terms of employment structure. If we let our growth rate go below 6 percent, we cannot keep up with the demand for jobs and will fall into social disorder due to unemployment." Actually, even at 12 percent growth it's hard to see how the economy can ever provide enough good jobs for the several-hundred-million strong army

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of the underemployed bequeathed to China by its socialist past.

Eight hundred million Chinese rural residents live on about half as much arable land as some 5 million farming Americans. Eighty million to 120 million, depending on whose figures you choose, are stuck in poverty that is irremediable unless they move, because their soil, water and transport resources are too meager to support them. Even those living in fertile areas farm an average of only 100 days a year because their plots are so small. Reformers estimate that to transfer enough people from the land to make agriculture efficient would require from 150 million to 300 million new jobs in other fields. From 40 million (officially) to 100 million (unofficially) peasants are already roaming the country looking for work in factories, construction sites, private households or as farm hands. The higher estimates amount to 5 to 8 percent of the country's population.

Many workers in the cities are also underemployed or unemployed. The streets are filled with peddlers and bicycle- and shoe-repairmen. Factories and schools run small shops to employ staff or dependents as clerks. On the Gate of Heavenly Peace, a soft drink vending machine is staffed by two young women who take your coins, drop them in the machine and hand you the can. The reformers are like Buster Keaton on the railroad track: no matter how fast they run, the population keeps gaining on them. In the days of the command economy, the regime provided full employment (more precisely, fully disguised unemployment) without inflation by controlling prices, at a high cost in inefficiency. Deng's reforms have dismantled most of the command mechanisms. China's leaders now maneuver between inflation and unemployment as leaders in democratic countries do.

Events such as Tiananmen—or the peasant uprising in Renshou County, Sichuan, in 1993, or rural protests and spontaneous factory strikes, reported to number in the thousands over the last year—are China's moral equivalent of off-year elections, but they are a lot scarier and less predictable. This is one reason (along with the weakness of the Central Bank) that inflationary and deflationary policies oscillate more violently in China than in the West. A large instance of such oscillation in 1988 lay behind the demonstrations in 1989.

The major divide between reformers and conservatives in Beijing now is over whether faster or slower growth is more risky to the regime. Inflation is said to be around 20 percent. Some say 30 percent,

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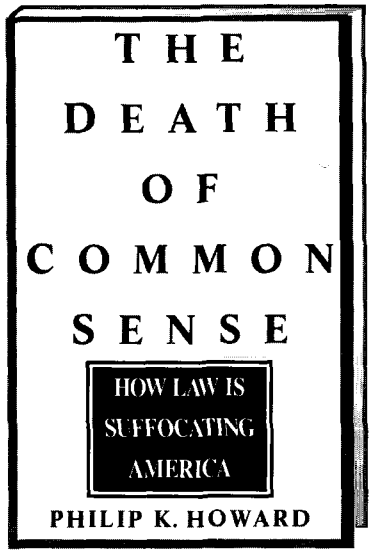

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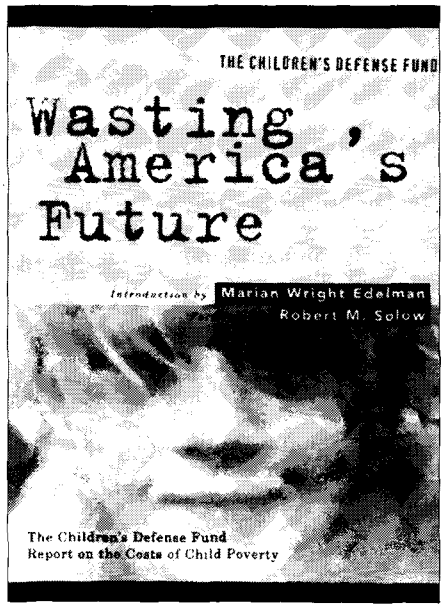
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and it is far more in the foodstuffs sector, which is especially visible because most people pay little for housing. Yet real incomes in the cities grew in 1993 and 1994. People may complain, but they have more money than they can spend (not least because there are so few good things to buy). Savings deposits have surged, and money has flowed into two new official stock markets and many more unofficial ones, bidding prices to ridiculous heights. Rural real income growth is slow, but the peasants are too dispersed to present much of a threat. Reformers believe that the party can survive inflation as long as winners substantially outnumber losers in the cities.

Conservatives see inflation as the main threat. The unemployed can be scattered and suppressed. Inflation upsets everyone: even the winners see other people getting ahead faster than themselves, and the government's share of the pie seems to take more diverse, unfair and irritating forms even as it shrinks in relation to GNP. If the government tries to smooth imbalances by helping the losers, it moves toward indexation and risks hyperinflation. But if it lets the winners win, those who benefit most are private and semiprivate entrepreneurs who can never be firm allies of the regime.

Conservatives point to a second cost of the reformers' strategy of stimulating growth by weakening state control: a scramble to privatize state assets. When state enterprises set up subsidiaries and subsidiaries of subsidiaries, the government ends up with an empty shell whose contents have slipped into the hands of the managers and their friends and relatives. The same thing happens when a government enterprise's money is sent abroad to be invested, or is put into the stock market to be "stir-fried" (the Chinese financial though not culinary equivalent of "churning"). Land-use rights are also stir-fried. Since all urban and most rural land belongs to the government, people with official connections can acquire such rights, get development licenses and raise investment money from government organs and state enterprises looking for fast returns. They don't necessarily develop the land. All these devices lead to assets moving beyond state control.

The reformers know these tricks; but they see them as necessary methods of transition to a more efficient property rights system, like the Enclosure Movement in eighteenth-century England. Scams grow faster than laws, so it is seldom clear what is illegal. Many entrepreneurs brag about the social wealth and the jobs that they create, and their public-spiritedness in working closely with local officials. Because the current state of Chinese law leaves private capital legally and politically insecure, many of the purloined assets are consumed in the form of cars, housing and foreign trips instead of being reinvested. This creates an expense-account frenzy that makes the American two-martini lunch look like the cottage cheese diet plate at a diner.

The third cost that the conservatives see in all-out growth is the decay of moral values. Their idea of decay consists of one part traditionalist revival (old novels, Daoist fortune-tellers, Mao images used as lucky charms), one part foreign influence (rock music, porn videos), one part human nature. A Communist official who specializes in ideological education for a large government bureaucracy explained that "for several decades we were able to keep China the cleanest society in history. Now that we have reduced control to let the economy grow, human nature being what it is, unclean things have developed, like drugs, gambling and prostitution. If we're going to bring in foreign capital we have to accommodate the Westerners' lifestyles. After all, they can't bring their wives with them to China." Deng belittled such trends as "flies coming in an open window." Schell is a skillful entomologist of such flies. His chapters on publishing and music sketch a popular culture that is vulgar, vibrant and despairing.

Finally, the conservatives fear the growth of an independent legal system. The reformers think the growth-generating benefits of entrepreneurship can be reaped only if the government protects the rights of property owners with a reliable system of laws and courts. The Administrative Litigation Law and the economic courts operate under party guidance and are limited in mission. But conservatives argue that full legal protection for private property will doom the Communist system, not only economically but politically. It will set up independent power centers hostile to the party on which the party must rely for economic results and hence legitimation. They fear the regime is making its survival hostage to antagonistic forces.

The reformers are up to more than providing a safety valve for social discontent, as Schell surmises, but less than Kristof implies when he says, in one of the chapters he authored, that "even [some] senior party officials were against the party." The reformers' strategy is to weaken party control and install a market and even multiparty democracy, so the party can regain its legitimacy and survive. As a senior reformist told me, "Our current leaders are not legitimate in the eyes of the people, but they can become legitimate if they continue reform and develop a degree of democracy. We will support them in this. It's no good to negate the authority of the Chinese Communist Party because then China would dissolve." In effect, the reformers believe that the price of continuing Communist power is an end to communism as China has known it.

As Deng's illness deepened last summer, the struggle between development and control intensified. While the provinces and enterprises fought for more credit, the central authorities led by Vice Premier Zhu Rongji tried to restrict it. Beijing ordered limits on markets in stocks, commodities, futures and real estate; provincial officials circumvented them. Beijing tried to increase the share of taxes passed on to the central government by local tax collectors; regional authorities and local enterprises fought for rebates and postponements.

At the level of ideology, the conflict took the form of debates over property rights and privatization, the nature of socialism and the degree to which the party's values should limit economic dynamics. In these polemics, the conservatives' voices were loudest. They control the Central Committee Propaganda Department and through it the main Beijing print media, known as the "two newspapers and seven magazines." Their outlets argue that, in the words of Premier Li Peng, "No state industry, no Chinese-style socialism."

The conservatives' constituencies include state enterprise workers who have lost out in the reforms, farmers stuck on the land, retired people left adrift by the collapse of the communes and hollowing of state enterprises and some cadres and intellectuals who believe in the vision of the '50s. Incredible though it seems to anyone who knows history, many Chinese—especially those too young to remember them—think of the Mao years as a time of social fairness, order, equality, incorruptibility and government concern for the common man. They trace the abandonment of Maoist values in the 1980s to Western economic pressure and cultural subversion, and not to the failure of the system itself.

The most important conservative power base remains the elders. They are seven or eight men, in or near their 90s, who poke their noses into everybody else's business. Their graceless calligraphy is all over Beijing, on highway overpasses, magazine titles, book covers and

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office nameplates. The lurching brushwork silently reminds the public that Big Brother is not dead yet. The atmosphere in Beijing is so tense that some reformers fear a possible Soviet-style conservative coup after Deng's death, though this fear is more a measure of reformist anxiety than conservative strength.

In the provinces, the debates in Beijing are irrelevant. "Since Comrade Deng Xiaoping went on his Southern tour," a local official told me, "our thought has been liberated. All that counts here is economic growth." Referring to the chief conservative ideologist in Beijing, this official continued, "Let Deng Liqun serve as a mayor and he would give all that up." In this respect, the Beijing focus of both books is a disadvantage. Neither makes clear that the provincial and lower-level bureaucracies are reformist-controlled, or that this is important for understanding the explosive response to Deng's Southern sayings.

When reformist leaders Hu Yaobang and Zhao Ziyang fell from power in 1987 and 1989 respectively, their followers below the central level stayed in place. All the local cadres one meets today were promoted by Hu and Zhao during the vast personnel turnovers that they carried out in the party and state bureaucracies in the 1980s. The mayors and county chiefs around the country, who are now in their 30s and 40s, come from industrial backgrounds, unlike their predecessors, who were 50 or older and had agricultural backgrounds. The old cadres tried to meet Deng's goal of "doubling and redoubling GNP" by developing agriculture. The new men try to put factories in every mountain and valley. Even among the vast mass of CCP officials, only growth makes their own rule legitimate. Local officials will be sacked by superiors if they fail to meet demanding targets of local development.

The Chinese seem universally to believe that the sole bottleneck to economic growth is a lack of capital for investment. Neither the country as a whole nor any administrative unit within it thinks it has enough local money to meet its growth targets. Many tacitly (and wrongly) attribute China's growth to money from abroad, which (counting both loans and investment) totals roughly $90 billion since the start of the reforms, or about $5 per year per Chinese citizen. Local officials have become fund-raisers as tireless as American university presidents. For a given city or county, outside capital can come from government banks (whose lending ceilings, however, are tied to local savings), the provincial or central govern-

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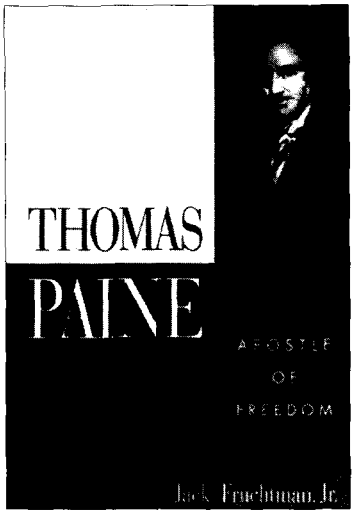

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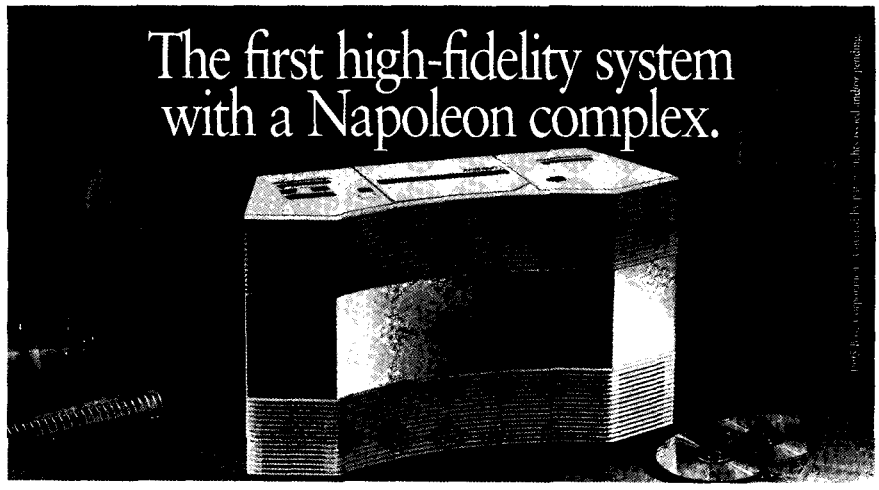

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ments (say, by way of a dam project), mainland Chinese enterprises in other provinces (which may want access to a local raw material, for example), or investors abroad, including Taiwan and Hong Kong (who invest for cheap labor or access to Chinese markets). In a manner reminiscent of the pledges of higher production targets during Mao's Great Leap Forward, local officials call meetings to stoke investment fever. Growth is not the most important thing, it is the only thing.

Toting Motorola cellular phones and riding in a hierarchy of cars—from joint venture-produced Jeeps and V.W. Santanas to imported Lexuses and Mercedes (stratified less by rank as in the past than by enterprise profitability)—local party members do whatever works. They set up private factories disguised as collective enterprises; establish false-front joint ventures with local capital laundered through Hong Kong; commandeer peasants' land without adequate compensation to build factories; import contract workers from poor villages nearby and poor provinces far away; ignore environmental regulations; and sell public land to foreign investors at low prices in the guise of land-use leases. Then they treat themselves to overseas inspection tours paid for by local entrepreneurs, especially to Thailand, where they can study both light manufacturing and the sex industry.

On a recent visit to a small provincial city, I was honored at a banquet with a live fish that had been held briefly in boiling oil from the gills down and was served staring and gulping, lifting its head in a vain attempt to move the rest of its body. The Chinese Communist Party is like this fish: the head in Beijing is alive, but the apparatus in the provinces does not respond. Provincial officials know that there are rules against all sorts of things that they do, but they have also learned that Beijing loves a fait accompli. As the saying goes in Guangdong, "Go on green, speed on yellow, go around on red."

Kristof calls the result of this activity "market Leninism." It is a catchy term, but not entirely correct. If a market is an exchange mechanism open to all participants on an equal basis, China does not have many markets. If Leninism is a system of centralized political control, China no longer has much Leninism. What governs China today is more like a network, a kind of Chinese six degrees of separation, in which everyone who counts works through links to everybody else who counts. Buying and selling are done through friends and involve commissions. An enterprise may need the help of someone who knows someone to solve problems with land rights, roads, water, electricity, labor, pollution or taxes. To prepare for this, managers sound out influential people socially to see if they are "the kind of person one can talk to." Any exchange of favors occurs as between friends. In these transactions it doesn't matter whether one is a reformer or a conservative. Nobody is against "human feelings."

"The collective is a great invention," one entrepreneur told me. (This is the term for enterprises that are neither state-owned nor openly private; their aggregate output value now approximately equals that of the state sector.) "It borrows from the bank, expands into a group company, spends money directly on its officers in the form of expense money and keeps all profits after taxes. Yet it is registered with the state, and supervised by local government in a friendly, helpful way."

"Many organs are supposed to supervise us, but none does," said another manager. "I have no mothers-in-law [government organs meddling in the management of business]. I don't have to pay assessments. But I voluntarily gave 450,000 yuan [about $53,000] to a school. I paid 40,000 yuan for roads for two villages, and gave several thousand yuan to the peasants living in the mountains." A rough kind of ward-boss system is developing out of the influence market of officials and entrepreneurs. In one village a farmer made 3 million yuan in private enterprise, then built a road and an office building for the village and invested in a collective cement factory. He was selected village chief and party secretary. Such acts may be in the spirit of Mao's adage, "serve the people." But as a Chinese friend pointed out, "Everyone would be coming to him for money anyway. Once they have this much money, they have enough to spend and they need political power so other people won't oppress them."

Ordinary people have to be just as deferential to the new entrepreneur-officials as they were to the old commissars. Whatever their benevolence toward clients and friends, the new men are no more subject to checks and balances than the old were. They often represent the interests of a dominant clan. In the worst cases, some of which Kristof and WuDunn report, they act like a "thugocracy."

Networks do not function just among the elite. Migrant workers from different provinces have their capos; gangs who kidnap and sell women as wives to poor villagers have their links across the country; underground publishers and book distributors have their systems of connections. As WuDunn shows in her description of kidnappers and Schell shows in his description of booksellers, the outlaw and underground networks are as liable to link themselves back to party members as are more respectable entrepreneurs. China doesn't have a Mafia like Russia because in China the Communist Party is the Mafia.

Still, this doesn't mean that the state is rotting, as Kristof says it is. In an important forthcoming work called *Governing China*, Kenneth Lieberthal provides an insightful description of the structure and working of the Chinese government. He shows that the apparatus is much changed from the rigidities of the Mao era, thanks to Hu Yaobang's and Zhao Ziyang's replacement of commissars with technocrats and to the decentralization of administrative power. The party-state has become flexible, adaptable and effective.

But without a charismatic leader like Mao and a driving ideology, this complex, multifunctional bureaucracy—the largest in the world, with the widest-ranging duties—has become overloaded at the top and gridlocked below, a system that Lieberthal calls "fragmented authoritarianism." This has given rise to decision-making by negotiation and consensus. Since the bureaucracy covers almost all of society and the economy, almost all of society and the economy participate in the negotiations. The process is slow. Efficiency comes by accelerating bureau-to-bureau, region-to-region and government-to-society interactions through the use of informal mechanisms. Whatever their functional necessity, to many Chinese these interactions look, walk and quack like corruption. A popular ditty goes, "A sharp new car, shiny and fine, the guy inside is on the take / Shoot him first and later try him, guaranteed there's no mistake."

If China has neither markets nor a Leninist bureaucracy, it also lacks a civil society, another concept that both books try to employ. In the West, civil society grew from within the market, which operated apart from the state. The concepts of market, state and society lack clear referents in the Chinese situation. In "the economy," the relationship between enterprises and the bureaucracies that either "own" or regulate them is so negotiable that the Chinese analog to civil society exists within the ambit, and even inside the formal confines, of the bureaucracy. In "society," almost every ostensibly independent organization—institutes, foundations, consultancies—is linked into the party-state network through formal registra-

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tion, informal patronage or both. It is hard to say whether the state penetrates society or society penetrates the state.

The ambiguity of the boundaries between state and society may explain why the Chinese value their dissidents so much less than the West does. Wei Jingsheng, China's candidate for a Nobel Peace Prize, was released from fifteen years' imprisonment in September 1993, but insisted on speaking his mind with foreign reporters, including Kristof and WuDunn, and on sending prison manuscripts to Hong Kong journals. He was detained again in the spring of 1994, and his whereabouts are unknown. Han Dongfang, the labor leader who is the subject of a chapter in Schell's book, got early release from prison because of tuberculosis with which the jailers purposely infected him, came to the United States for medical treatment and has been trying to return to resume his work as an organizer.

Most Chinese are unmoved by such heroism. They think that the network provides the best way to do things. Just as in Chinese religion the gods are pleased by ritual conformity rather than by inner faith, so in political society the two security ministries don't seem to care what people think or even what they say, as long as they don't say it at the wrong time and place. Tact is more important than substance in a network society. Virtually anything can be said in private, and radical ideas can even be published in academic journals, in appropriate language. The same sentiments become political crimes when voiced to foreign reporters. The dissidents court repression because they insist on their rights. It is hard for most Chinese to see why this is worth doing. That is why so few of them need to be repressed.

Repression looms large to foreign reporters because they are, along with the dissidents, its main targets. The government marks Western journalists who fail to play by Chinese rules as hostile. Even the sophisticated Ministry of Foreign Affairs seemed not to understand why people such as Schell, Kristof, WuDunn and former *Washington Post* reporter Lena Sun refused to help their minders do their jobs. They went after them not with the gray routine of Smiley's war, but with an authentic sense of outrage. (The stories are told well in both books.) Reporters treated this way see the negative side of the system in more detail than most Chinese. As Kristof observes, the regime "has the worst public relations sense of any major government in the world."

Many human rights that are promised in the Chinese constitution do not exist at all, such as the right to a free press, to assembly and demonstration, to a fair and public trial. Yet in other ways Chinese society is free. Schell says, "A combination of freedom in the marketplace and response to foreign pressure made it possible for Chinese to buy what they wanted, enjoy private lives, speak more openly and even to travel abroad more freely than ever before." Jobs and inflation, housing and traffic, noise and bad air worry most Chinese. They often greet the Western concern for human rights with hostility. This is not a reason for the West to reduce its attention to human rights problems in China, but it suggests why the language of rights gets a limited response among the mass of those deprived of their rights.

Not that the public's complacency about rights makes the regime feel secure. There are "live volcanoes everywhere," a social scientist told me. Factory workers feel powerless within their enterprises. Farmers resist government orders on what to plant and how much to sell. Financially burdened local governments multiply assessments on villagers, who have started to resist. June 4 remains an unsettled issue, inside and outside the party. The government was rumored to have spent 8 billion yuan (nearly $1 billion) last spring preparing to put down potential demonstrations on the anniversary of June 4. A reversal of the government's verdict that Tiananmen constituted "turmoil," rather than a patriotic action, is widely expected after Deng dies.

And yet the authors of these books did not discover anybody who was trying to overthrow the Chinese Communist Party. The dissidents remain peaceful and moderate. Many intellectuals are rethinking their role in 1989, in a trend called neo-conservatism that supports the idea of authoritarian development. One researcher who predicted the disturbances of 1989 told me that another outbreak is not in the cards today. In 1987 his public opinion surveys showed parallel rising lines representing people's wants for the future and their expectations. In late 1988 the lines suddenly diverged. Wants were still rising, but the abortion of price reform and subsequent economic shakeout pushed hopes down. According to a formula as old as Machiavelli, desire minus anticipation equals trouble. It was the collapse of hope more than the increase of anger at inflation or corruption that brought people into the streets in 1989. The lines returned to their parallel course after the crackdown, mainly because people reduced their hopes while the government managed to deliver more than they expected. Surveys now show desires rising again, but optimism for the future is keeping pace, at least as long as Deng lives.

Some Chinese believe that economic backwardness dooms the country to dictatorship indefinitely. As a party official said, "Our people are not ready for democracy. They aren't interested. Their educational standard is too low, and they don't know anything about politics. They are too poor; their bellies are not yet full." But it is also true that many ordinary Chinese are more optimistic than their masters. A Beijing resident remarked to me, "Of course we mind our own business: the 1989 demonstrations showed that the people have no power. But change is inevitable. People say the Chinese people don't know enough to be voters, but that's because they put up some candidate nobody knows, they don't explain what he stands for and you have to vote for him anyway. If there was an election campaign, people would see what the candidates could do for them, and they would know how to vote."

So what is the party afraid of? Projecting blame on foreigners for prostitution, corruption, dissent, bad art, the high cost of international capital, the Tibetan independence movement and for China's poverty—whether traced to the Opium War, Bush's sanctions or Washington's demand that China open its market as a precondition for joining GATT—seems to disguise the party's bad conscience. As a Chinese friend said, "The CCP's problem is the CCP."

Kristof and WuDunn consider a number of scenarios for China's future. Some are more bloodcurdling than most China specialists are willing seriously to envision: the loss of Tibet and Xinjiang, Cantonese independence and a national coalescence of worker and peasant uprisings to overthrow the regime. But they give greatest emphasis to the scenario suggested by their title, that the economic boom will continue, making China in the next century "the biggest player in the history of man," in the words of Singapore's Lee Kuan Yew. Kristof portrays a possible resurgent China of "blood and iron," armed with enough nuclear weapons and aircraft carriers and burning enough oil to destabilize the world's military balance, oil markets and environment.

Meanwhile, many Chinese regard outsiders' fear of China as the instrument of malicious intent, designed to sow discord between China and its neighbors, spur a regional arms race and obstruct China's development. If mutual fear is not alleviated by more openness on both sides

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(one of the aims of Defense Secretary William Perry's recent trip to China), the two devil theories may cycle with one another until they produce a mutual paranoia.

"You thought you could strangle us with your sanctions," a factory manager bellowed at me between challenges to drain cups of maotai. (The misunderstanding is widespread in China that George Bush's post-Tiananmen sanctions restricted U.S. trade and investment; they didn't.) "China is the best country in the world. Neither you nor anybody else can stop our growth. America and China are different. One side will never understand the other. I don't care if 300 or 3,000 people were killed in Tiananmen. It's a small matter." On occasions like this, one glimpses the specter of a possible Chinese national socialism, a frightening mix of Confucian and Marxian anti-individualism, statism, irridentism and xenophobia.

China today can be described accurately only by self-contradiction. Autonomous forces are inside the party-state; operation outside the network of power is permitted by linkages within it; insiders are the most successful outsiders. Such eluding of our categories of thinking is disturbing partly because we are anxious to reach a judgment. "We wish we could balance good against evil on a single scale and come up with a net positive or negative reading," writes Kristof. He knows that such a balance is impossible. Still, both books are testimony to the desire for it; they are like diaries of their authors' contradictory emotional responses to contradictory realities. Yet China's paradoxes may be more than a feature of transition. They may be constitutive of a system in which power is so all-encompassing yet decentralized that the trinity of state, society and economy have become one. This may just be the way China works.

ANDREW J. NATHAN is professor of political science and director of the East Asian Institute at Columbia University.

Cinema Paradiso

BY GUILLERMO CABRERA INFANTE

A Biographical Dictionary of Film: Third Edition by David Thomson

(Knopf, 834 pp., $40, $25 paper)

The other evening at Le Bistro, in South Kensington, supping with an Italian film director, all of a sudden and apropos of nothing he praised Robert Aldrich. "What a director!" he exclaimed with garlic-scented vowels. "Just imagine, *Kiss Me Deadly* was his first film!" For a moment I heard him say *Kiss Me Daddy*. Then I retorted (I always retort), "But that was not Aldrich's first movie." "Yes it was," affirmed the *regista*. "It wasn't," I insisted. "He made *Apache* and *Veracruz* first." Obviously he didn't believe me. To redirect him, I said: "See *Katz*." He said, "But *Cats* is an English musical!" I should have laughed, but when it comes to the movies I am always serious.

Film directors shouldn't argue with me about movies. I can kiss them deadly. I explained what *Katz* was, *The Film Encyclopedia* by Ephraim Katz, and suggested to the Italian that he buy a copy, since he could afford it. (Not many people can.) When I came home and consulted my *Katz*, I found out that I was wrong, too. Aldrich had made *The Big Leaguer* and *World for Ransom* earlier. That's why *Katz* has nine lives. David Thomson's *A Biographical Dictionary of Film* (both books have just been reissued) has even more lives than *Katz*, but unlike Katz, Thomson is a killer with a deus ex machinegun.

We, the sons of Lumière, rejoice in the light that moves across the night for all who sit in darkness, as St. Luke, the patron saint of the cinema, said. So we ust rejoice, too, in the dual appearance, revised and augmented, of these two books, an encyclopedia and a dictionary. Moviegoers and moviesitters are in luck: such publications happen only twice a century. But they were far from being in an eclipse all these years. They always shine, in fact, like the moon, in borrowed light.

The dictionary of film biography is to the movies what Dante's *Comedy* is to Florentines. If you don't find yourself in Hell, please look under Purgatory. The rest is left to good luck, since Paradise is only a pair of dice.

Thomson's book, which was first published in 1970 and reprinted in 1975, is still under the aegis of *la politique des auteurs*, first formulated in France in 1954. I would like to see Thomson write more about films and less about directors. After all, what we see on the screen is the result of a collective effort. Nobody is essential to the making of a movie, except perhaps the person with the camera, and even the cinematographer, a grander title, can be removed. As it happened with the veteran Stanley Cortex (of *The Magnificent Ambersons* fame), fired during the shooting of *Chinatown* to be replaced by the novice Johnny Alonzo with no artistic conflict. In sum, I don't believe in *la politique des hauteurs*.

No amount of admiration for Thomson's tome persuades me to believe that Jean-Luc Godard is a great filmmaker and John Ford a minor one. According to Thomson, Ford accomplished a feat of clay. But no film director from Orson Welles to Howard Hawks (Thomson's patron sinner) would or could agree. He claims that Ford was silly and sentimental. But what was Griffith, for heaven's sake? Chaplin, on the other hand, was nothing if not maudlin, giving all his movies the mawkish of death. Ford is, without the doubt of a shadow, the greatest American moviemaker of all time. He needed only to say, "I'm John Ford, I make Westerns." All the other directors only remake Westerns, most of them made by Ford. Not for nothing did Welles, when he first came to Hollywood and was asked to mention the three greatest directors, say: "John Ford, John Ford and John Ford."

The panning of Stanley Kubrick is uncalled for and therefore unnecessary. Granted, *A Clockwork Orange* is a bad apple, not because it is violent, but because it is utterly ugly. But Thomson attests to the greatness of *The Shining*, which is not a horror movie but that rarity, a film about *horror vacui*. He praises George Cukor, a mere illustrator of screenplays, but Cukor, a generous director if ever there were one, was better for actors (and above all actresses) than for art. But we agree, Thomson and I, about the genius of Orson Welles, the talent of King Vidor (you have only to see *The Fountainhead*) and the astonishing eye of Josef von Sternberg. That, I believe, is agreement enough.

Thomson's *Dictionary* is at times a cemetery of eminences or near-has-beens. From their graves, the ghosts, the ghouls and the vamps come back to life, sometimes successfully, sometimes disgraced. But the secret of this book is the secret of

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the movies: it gives you pleasure. Since their inception, movies have been a gift to the eye and later to the ear. For intellect and glum, you read Heidegger. But movies move you as they move. Thomson understands this thoroughly. And he talks not only of the movies, but also, and mostly, of their makers. His bios are so vivid that *The Independent* in London recently used Thomson's old entry on Burt Lancaster, revived by his death: the actor's biography became his obituary.

Katz is for data and dates, Thomson is for film fun. But what Thomson doesn't know about the movies is not worth knowing. The dictionary is, like some movies, extremely pleasurable, but sometimes the pleasure is mixed with some perversity. Thomson talks often of voyeurs, and he is right. All moviegoers watch. Peep they must. But Peeping Tom has here a partner in Doubting Thomson, some of whose notices are verdicts. (Ford must be brought to the gallows in Monument Valley and strapped to the wheel of a moving stagecoach!)

This dictionary could be declared the best book on the movies ever written in English. But a dictionary is not a book. They are never really read, and if they are read, they are read at random. When you look up a word, on your way you are snared by other words that happen to be near, or far away. In Thomson's book, some entries are longer than others, or terribly short, or unfairly long. And unlike *Katz*, this not a democratic book.

Joseph Losey, some kind of Goethe in Chelsea, wouldn't like his entry. Losey was a man who didn't like the name of Joseph but hated being called just Joe. Hence his dilemma of a career that went from being the literati's darling to being almost a has-been only ten years later. But I find his remake of *M* as good as the Fritz Lang original. So does Thomson. Losey's problem is that his movies made in Hollywood (*The Prowler, M, The Boy with Green Hair*) are good and sometimes very good, while his films made in England are not. Was it Harold Pinter who made him sick and slick?

Thomson can be generous and just at the same time, as when he judges the case of Michael Cimino. Anyone who saw *The Deer Hunter* (and for once the ominous epithet "politically correct" creeps in) can call it a fine movie. But the unhappy few who could finish *Heaven's Gate* would not call it a fine mess, just a mess. One couldn't agree with Thomson more here. Still, it is inadmissible to compare Brian De Palma with Leni Riefenstahl. One must not forget that she was a Nazi propagandist; a diabetic Hitler was her blood sugar

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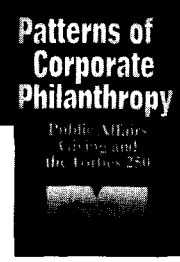

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daddy. Thomson lists *Angel Face* and *Bonjour Tristesse* as Otto Preminger's best movies, but he should have mentioned *Laura,* his third portrait of a woman. Preminger was hideous on the set, but he delivered. We all know that nice directors finish last, or never.

The notices on second-rate directors (John Farrow, Cy Endfield) are often concise but generous. But Thomson omits outstanding directors such as Ivan Passer (though he has an appraisal of Passer's masterpiece *Cutter's Way*). Also there are names that will not be found in the dictionary, even in the margins. Absent are Emilio Fernández (*Katz* calls him "the most important single figure in Mexican cinema") and the great Abbas Kiarostami from Iran. Fernando Trueba and almost all the Spanish young directors (except Almodóvar) are missing. There is not one single mention of the great Slavko Vorkapich, who appears in the last *Katz.* I don't mean to be a master of acrimonies, but without Vorkapich the Hollywood movies of the '30s and '40s would have lacked dynamism. Slow Slavko begat Don Siegel who begat Clint Eastwood who begat all the Peoples.

Meanwhile mediocrities such as Anthony Asquith and Mel Ferrer are quoted abundantly. Thomson's book suffers a little from Bloom's Syndrome: to make lists is to make waves. But I suppose that Thomson loves being Aeolus in a theater once in a while, as he enjoys becoming a trade wind. With a perverse and persevering spirit of geometry, the columns erected to Liza Minnelli are almost as tall as those of her father, the truly brilliant Vincente. He is trapped between his daughter and Carmen Miranda, making him the *auteur* with the tutti-frutti art. Thomson gives away his columns like so many prizes for excellence—or takes them back and cuts them down to size when he faces mediocrity or, what is worse in art, bad form. The major critical contribution made by Thomson has him speaking before Cary Grant's tomb before everybody, even before Grant died in fact, claiming as early as 1970 and again now that good Ol' Cary is the greatest actor in the business barring none. Grant, he said, "was the best and most important actor in the history of the cinema." Many critics agreed, but later.

Thomson makes the oddest disclosures: Charles Laughton was a student at the Royal Academy of Dramatic Art under Claude Rains. But minor mysteries must remain minor. Can anybody explain why an all-American director such as Henry Hathaway was actually called Henri Leopold de Fiennes? And what, *no Cesar Romero*? To Cesar, Cesars. He was one of those supporting players (I call them *los secundarios*), the ones who helped make Hollywood what it was, and most of the time were much better actors than the stars whom they threatened to obscure.) What about the great Fortunio Bonanova, the only actor, besides Akim Tamiroff, to steal scenes from Orson Welles? Or Juano Hernández, the best black actor ever? And George Coulouris, Paul Stewart, Ray Collins, Erskine Sanford, Gus Schilling, who together with Everett Sloane and Bonanova helped Welles to make *Kane*? Thomson remembers Eve Arden, but he squanders the treasure trove of American supporting players. Dan Seymour, the poor man's Greenstreet, is missing in "Action!" Abbott (and Costello), but not Dolores Costello. Paul Cox, but not Wally Cox or Wally Ford. Nor the sleazy Slezak. Paul Mazursky, but not Mike Mazurki. All kinds of Mayers, Mayos and Meyers, but no Emile Meyer. These actors and actresses are the reservoir gods of the movies.

Thomson is the Dr. Johnson of film. He has compiled a dictionary, he is English, and he knows what he is talking about even when he talks about something else. Thomson's dictionary is designed for reference, but its main attraction is that it is a delight to browse through, to leaf through, to read aloud to a constant companion in the dark—though, like the movies, it might do something to your eyes. Had he lived, Dr. Johnson could have said that a dictionary cannot embalm moving pictures. In the same way, Thomson's dictionary is not definitive, it is merely pioneering. But this book is more than a dictionary. It is a toll and a roll and a poll. In *Citizen Kane*, Thompson, with a P, is the agent commissioned to investigate the meaning of Rosebud. Our Thomson, no P please, investigates the meaning of the movies: Rosebud, tender buttons, omphalos.

GUILLERMO CABRERA INFANTE's new book, *Mea Cuba*, has just been published by Farrar, Straus & Giroux.

Patriotic Gore

BY RICHARD WHITE

Warpaths: Invasions of North America by Ian K. Steele

(Oxford University Press, 282 pp., $25)

Ian K. Steele's book is a history of two of a half centuries of killing and dying that accompanied European settlement of North America. It is about the Indian wars that were chronic throughout the Colonial period, and about the imperial struggles that began in 1664 and ended in 1760; but most of all it is about the way that those two sagas were linked. Steele does not separate Spanish *entradas* in the Southeast, the English conflicts against the Powhatan confederacy (1609-14, 1624-32) in Virginia and King Philip's War (1675-76) in New England from the inter-European struggles, that is from Queen Anne's War (1702-13) and the Seven Years War (1756-63). In this history, the blood flows together.

Indian peoples provide the common link in these battles, and the centrality of Indian peoples distinguishes *Warpaths* from earlier histories of imperial conflict, and makes Steele's book one of a growing number of studies that bring Indians back into the main currents of Colonial history. Here, Indians matter. They are not absent, nor are they reduced to auxiliaries, to implacable savages or dependable scouts.

In order to write an ethnographically informed history of warfare in Colonial America, Steele feels that he must wage a war of his own against what he characterizes as two potent legends. The first one, a nineteenth-century myth given its most lasting form by Frederick Jackson Turner, depicted the continent as largely empty. The second one is the recent resuscitation of an older Arcadian legend of peace and plenty. Aboriginal North America, Steele contends, has retroactively become a paradise destroyed by European cruelty, disease and violence. It was supposedly a place where evil entered only from the outside.

But there is a third legend, a very pertinent one, that Steele only implicitly addresses. This legend makes Indians cruel, remorseless and bloodthirsty enemies, and it makes whites their victims. It is a legend quite familiar to Steele, be-

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cause he dissected a version of it with uncommon insight and skill in his book *Betrayals: Fort William Henry and the "Massacre."* This legend essentially inverts the history of the continent; it makes whites the victims of attack, not the attackers. It turns conquerors into people seeking only to defend themselves; and Indians become cruel and remorseless savages awash in the blood of white victims.

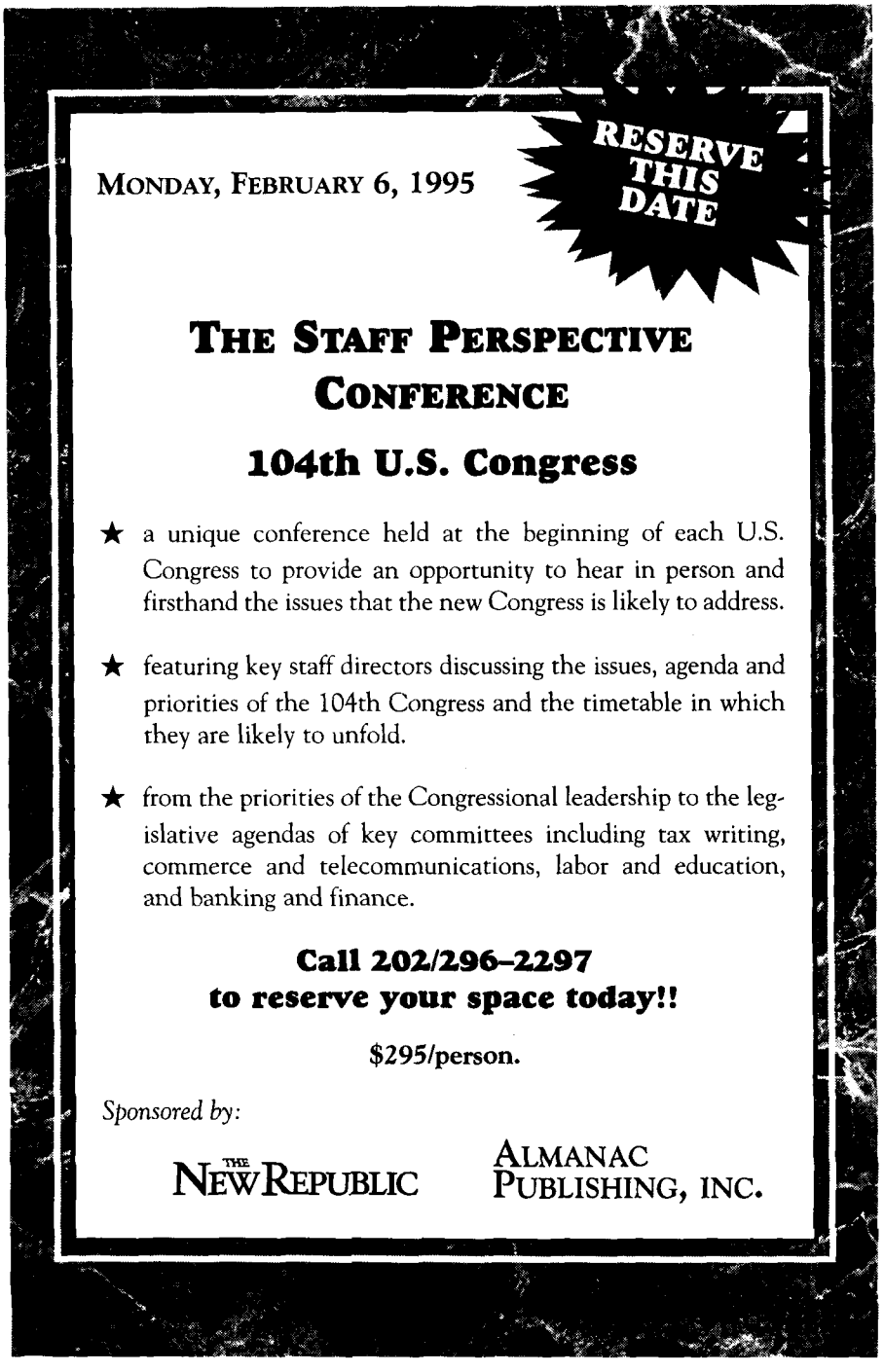
If, in the late twentieth century, this story has lost some of its power, the markers of its influence are still readily apparent. It is a legend whose beginnings lie in captivity narratives and whose culmination is Little Big Horn. It is lodged at the the core of one of our oldest stories about ourselves: the victim nation that never attacks, but only defends itself. Only when grievously provoked, we like to teach ourselves, do we pursue our bloody and justifiable vengeance. It is worth remembering that Anglo-Europeans were the ones who made victimization a favored route to cultural power, and an excuse for excess among us.

It is this last legend that actually seems most crucial to the structure of Steele's book, which is subtitled "Invasions of North America." "Invasions" is in some ways an inadequate description of Steele's account of conflict among hopelessly intertwined societies; but as an antidote to the legend of Indian aggression and white victimization, it is a near-perfect corrective to an older mythology. Invasions beget violence, and *Warpaths* is a book of unmitigated violence. There is barely time to drag one set of corpses off stage before another round of fighting erupts to create yet more.

The very abundance of conflict, the vast sweep of time and geography, the variety of combatants, the endless variations: it all breeds confusion. Who are all these people? Steele does not have space for the careful delineation of motive and character, the intricate discussions of the cultural or individual springs of war that made his earlier book, *Betrayals*, so powerful. This is violence as seen by strategists and generals. It sometimes has the peculiarly bloodless, almost antiseptic, quality of standard military history. War becomes an exercise in accounting: so many dead, so many wounded, so many missing. The narrative necessarily moves above the confusion, pain and meaninglessness encountered by individual combatants. Steele has good reason to emphasize this unfamiliar military history, but his emphasis makes Colonial history, and Indian-white relations, seem more thoroughly and decisively martial than they were. War was important but it was only an interlude in most people's lives. Contacts between societies went beyond bloodletting. Other factors intervened to shape the fates of individuals and peoples.

The sweep of the book diminishes its immediacy, and its tight focus can lead to oversimplifications, but its breadth nevertheless discloses a vast historical panorama. Eventually, the reader moves beyond any single conflict and watches them merge into a coherent pattern. Steele covers two and a half centuries of warfare in about 250 pages, and to make any sense of the carnage, he needs to categorize his wars. He groups them into four distinct but overlapping "invasions." Each invasion demarcates a shift in the killing. Step back from the body-count, and this ceases to be a homogeneous and undifferentiated slaughter.

Exotic disease, and new and deadly technologies brought from Europe, defined the first invasion, which began in 1513 when Ponce de Leon landed in Florida. The invaders killed with smallpox, usually unintentionally, and with swords and muskets, quite intentionally. This is hardly a surprising portrayal, but in many accounts this is where the story begins and ends. Devastated by disease, overwhelmed by European technology, Indians didn't stand a chance. By cutting too quickly to the chase—to the ultimate defeat of the Indians—we miss the complexities of the actual military history.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In Steele's retelling, this history is decidedly mixed. Europeans fail as well as conquer. During the early Florida expeditions, for example, disease devastated both sides. The Spanish with their muskets, horses and swords possessed a military technology superior to anything that the Indians could muster, but this did not prevent them from suffering great losses. Spaniards fell into ambushes and ran short of supplies; they sickened and died. Slavers ended up as slaves.

Settlers, as Steele notes, proved ultimately to be the most effective conquerors. The Spanish, as well as the English, the French, the Dutch and the Swedes, achieved some success only with the establishment of permanent Colonial settlements and outposts. Yet Steele remains aware of variations on his themes. There was no generic European settlement, and thus there was no single form of military relationship with Indian peoples. San Agustín, Jamestown, Plymouth and Quebec were quite different places with quite different sets of relations.

Nor did these settlements yield purely racial conflicts. Europeans hated each other; Indians hated each other. Such animosities were "too strong to make race war possible." Still, during this first stage Europeans were more successful at finding Indian allies than Indians were at finding dependable European allies. Neither the Powhatan Confederacy in Virginia, nor Metacom (King Philip) in New England had European allies. The Appalachees of the Florida Panhandle were allied with the Spanish, but it did them little good in a brutal war against English slavers and their Indian allies. For Indian peoples, catastrophic defeat by Europeans was one result of this invasion. But when Indian nations could find room to maneuver between contending Europeans, real opportunities arose.

Even as the first invasion rippled off into the interior, a second invasion broke on American shores in 1687. This second invasion derived from the Anglo-French struggle for dominance, but Indian participation was so fundamental that these wars were not just between colonies. The French depended on Indian allies for the survival of Canada. French weakness yielded Indian opportunity.

The English outnumbered the French twenty to one in North America, but between 1687 and 1760 the French and their Indian allies proved more than a match for the English colonies. Steele does a masterful job of detailing these Colonial wars, which were really sideshows to the main events in Europe. Colonials and Indians died, but ultimately the fates of the colonies were decided on European battlefields and at European peace tables.

There came to be a particular geography and pattern to these wars. The waters of the Canadian borderlands funneled armies into three gateways: Nova Scotia and lower St. Lawrence; the approach through the Richelieu River-Lake Champlain corridor; and the upper St. Lawrence-Lake Ontario route. These river systems formed the stages for wars that unfolded in a predictable set of acts. The Crowns would tell the Colonies when to start fighting. New France would begin the contest with major raids. New England responded by besieging a major French fort on the Nova Scotia peninsula. An attack on Quebec would follow. It would fail. Stalemate, marked by minor raids, ensued.

This stalemate yielded only death and wasted treasure for the European colonies, but it gained the Indian allies of New France a great deal. It halted settlement of Northern New England. It brought wealth into Indian towns across northern North America, in the form of presents, supplies, booty and captives who could be either adopted or sold. Warfare made Indians in New France matter politically; and because they mattered so much to the French, the English, too, sought to woo them. A very sophisticated forest diplomacy took shape. Wars begun for European purposes often served Indian ends.

There was a cost to all this, of course, but Indian towns remained largely immune from retaliatory English attacks until the Seven Years War in the mid-eighteenth century. Unlike the Indians and the French colonists, the English colonials were not skilled forest fighters. English colonial armies resembled European models in recruitment and tactics. The English could make a farmer into a fair imitation of a European soldier in weeks, but it took years to train him for woodland war.

Steele quotes a common Indian homily that European wars acted on Indians like the opposing blades of the scissors: they appeared to clash with each other, but actually they cut whatever lay between them, in this case the Indians. This homily was partially true, but it applied more to the last stages of warfare during the 1740s and 1750s. European peace was far more dangerous to Indian peoples than European war. As Steele points out, the wars in which the French and English attempted to obliterate Indian nations—the Fox Wars, the Natchez War, the Yamasee War—occurred during the generation of peace in Europe that followed the Treaty of Utrecht in 1713. Peace among themselves allowed the Europeans to be more unrestrained in their conflicts with Indians, and Indians had more trouble recruiting effective European allies.

The Seven Years War launched the third invasion, in which European soldiers, tactics and resources gradually came to dominate the fighting. The irony was that this Eurocentric war began with Colonial initiatives and the initial triumph of American and Ameri-

The Telegraph Baby: 1916

And now I remember the tall hussar
who gave me the halo of telegraph wire
which I wound round my body at the age of six.
Since then my hearing's been strangely acute,
for I watched as the workmen erected a line
of identical crosses all the way down
to the river that kept on discussing itself
out through the village, on to somewhere's sea ....
He was huge in his dolman and when he saw

my delight at the splitting and hewing of wood
he called me closer to his brilliant braid
then the world dipped and I could see the way
that men were cradled in the criss-cross tree,
hammering nonsense, till they left one man
like a Christ on the wire there, hanging alone
but listening to something that no one else heard.
My heart beat in dashes back down on the ground
and I knew that I'd learn how to understand

the metal's despatches. Now, since the war
I've crossed high passes to talk in Morse
to other transmitters, leading horses piled high
with the weight of talking, till I found my way
here to the trenches, to the news of troops,
disasters and weather, where now I'm stretched out,
nerves copper and all my circuits aware
they're transmitting a man on a wheel of barbed wire,
nothing but message, still tapping out fire.

GWYNETH LEWIS

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can Indian tactics and fighters. Virginia's incompetent aggression in the interior against the French at Fort Duquesne, rather than the Crown's command, touched off the struggle. Britain and France "lavished unprecedented military resources" on the North American theater, but the immediate results were disastrous. Their efforts brought predictable conflicts between Europeans and Colonials over tactics, objectives and the ethics of war, as well as the unpredicted failure of European troops.

The British suffered the most embarrassing failure. In 1755, Indians and French soldiers using Indian tactics ambushed and shattered General Braddock's army on its way to attack Fort Duquesne in western Pennsylvania. The French and Indians then unleashed a series of raids that devastated English frontiers in Virginia, Pennsylvania and Maryland. This strategy of defense through attack proved quite successful for the French in the first stages of the war.

At first, however, French regulars did little better than the British. General Jean-Armand, Baron de Dieskau and his French troops, despite early success and sometimes near suicidal bravery, were defeated by William Johnson and his Colonials and Mohawks. The defeats of Dieskau and Braddock, Steele points out, were not exactly parallel. Dieskau, who was familiar with European irregulars, actually abandoned conventional European tactics in his campaign. Steele puts forward a revisionist defense of Dieskau, who ended his short American career wounded and captured. He argues that Dieskau's tactics were original and flexible, and blames Dieskau's defeat on the refusal of his Indian allies to go along with his plans. This is a revealing, if disconcerting, analysis. It underlines the importance of the Indians, since the best of European strategies faltered without their approval and participation. But since convincing them of appropriate action was a necessary element of military success, Dieskau remains just as much a failure. The grounds of failure have merely shifted from faulty tactics and strategy to a failure to persuade.

Despite these famous early failures, European tactics and regulars eventually prevailed. It was, in Steele's phrase, a "gladiatorial" war fought largely according to European norms. Early French successes faded quickly as the Seven Years War proceeded. Canada suffered from constant food shortages and dwindling aid from France. William Pitt asserted centralized control from London and poured regulars and money into the colonies while British naval victories eliminated the French fleet. In New France, conventional European tactics replaced the mix of European and Indian tactics that dominated the early stages of the war. Angry at General Montcalm over their treatment at Fort William Henry and deprived of presents and supplies, most of France's Indian allies retreated into a wary neutrality. The war ended in a complete English victory. Not only had the English triumphed over the French, but European military tactics had become dominant in North America.

The British, however, had not triumphed over France's Indian allies. They had merely induced them to abandon the French. And when, in violation of specific promises, the British refused to withdraw from the Ohio Valley following the war, but instead expanded their hold and treated the Indians not as independent nations but as defeated and powerless enemies, the fourth and final invasion took place. Steele treats the Cherokee War of 1759-61 and the fighting known as Pontiac's Rebellion as related struggles. The Cherokee War, in the backcountry of the Carolinas and eastern Tennessee, ended with an Indian defeat, but Steele largely accepts new interpretations that see the fighting north of the Ohio between 1763 and 1765 as a stalemate rather than an English victory. The fighting achieved an unprecedented balance of power between Europeans and Indians: "the peace was an accommodation." Rather than posing as conquerors, the British agreed to replace the French as "fathers" to their Indian "children." The unraveling of this peace was at one with the unraveling of Britain's victory over European rivals for the control of North America. The British were neither able to control Colonial settlement of the backcountry and thus protect their Indian "children," nor were they able to control the colonies themselves. This dual unraveling ended the Colonial era.

Steele starts his story with European defeats and ends it with an accommodation. How historians frame their stories matters, and this is an interesting framing. It is designed to jar readers out of their customary readings. Like all histories, this is a history written very much for its time. It assumes an audience predisposed to see conflicts involving different races as racial conflicts. It assumes an audience that sees violence as a modern affliction. And so Steele's overriding concerns are the concerns of this audience: violence and race. But he writes against his audience's assumptions. To those who see modern violence as a degeneration from a sanitized past, he holds up a picture of that bloody past. Against those who reduce all to race, and for those who see racism as inevitably dominant, he seeks "small comforts." He writes a history that emphasizes bloodletting by Europeans and Indians, but diminishes purely racial conflict. As Steele says, "neither Amerindians nor Europeans were ever racist enough before 1765 to put aside pre-existing enmities and unite against strangers."

Recognizing our past as tangled, complicated and unpleasant does not present solutions to our present problems, but it does offer an obstacle to simple explanations that pose as solutions. Everything does not reduce to race. Cultural purity and an unproblematic Eurocentrism do not explain the tangled past of this country, either in peace or war, and give no sign of being its future.

The invasions that Steele examines cast the mold for subsequent Indian history. Precisely because these invasions involved rivalries among Europeans, they created, for Indian peoples, particular combinations of threat and opportunity. And out of these combinations, accommodation as well as bloodletting emerged. The decline of imperial warfare and the American domination of North America were the doom of the accommodations that Steele outlines here. Americans did not need Indians in the way that the English and the French needed Indians. Until the real resurgence of Indian power in the American West, Americans could progressively make Indians dependent, exotic and marginal as they never were during Steele's invasions.

RICHARD WHITE teaches history at the University of Washington.

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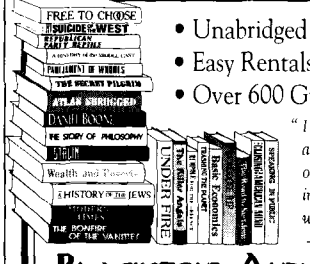

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NEW YORK DIARIST

Dirty books

SINCE LEAVING WASHINGTON FOR New York and TNR for *New York* last spring, I have triumphed over culture shock and, if truth be known, gone native. I've learned to casually drop the name "Tina" in place of "George," and now pass whole days without discussing how Leon Panetta has affected White House operations. I have purged the phrase "comfortably middle class" from my vocabulary. Nine-fifty for dessert? No problem. I understand a neighborhood to be an area two blocks long, a kitchen to be a room where you store appliances and a car something you call when you can't get a taxi. I like the higher threshold of eccentricity here. In Washington, an oddball is someone who plays the piano or wears bow ties. In New York, it's a practicing Druid or someone who hasn't left his apartment in seven years.

ONE OF THE FIRST THINGS YOU learn upon moving here is subway etiquette. A car fills as does a long row of urinals; you place yourself so as to be as far from every other person as is mathematically possible. An even more important rule is do not under any circumstances be caught noticing the psychotic behavior of others. The subway is surprisingly clean and safe, and more so all the time thanks to Rudy Giuliani, who takes such matters quite seriously. But with its moving platforms, odors, extremes of climate, performance beggars and full-time residents, it does constitute a kind of underground bedlam. This atmosphere exercises magnetic effect on lunatics, hence Colin Ferguson and, most recently, Edward Leary, the accused subway fire-bomber. Thanks to the tabloids, every subway maniac has a compensating hero. Last week it was Denfield Otto, a transit cop on his way to choir practice, who had the presence of mind to run for a fire extinguisher. I happened to be at City Hall the day after the disaster; Otto was standing by himself under a blaze of lights, performing the all-purpose press availability expected of such saviors. Washington's Metro, on the other hand, is a hyper-rational utopia that repels lunatics and consequently lacks heroes. No one lives inside its tunnels or sucks farecards out of its machines' slots. It makes no noise, other than the muffled "ping" and pneumatic "whoosh" that announces the arrival of another temperate, graffiti-free, on-schedule train filled with uniformed commuters. How boring.

I CONFESS TO A MILD GINGRICH fixation. I can stare at C-SPAN 2, which since the election has become the Newt Network, for minutes at a time. I used to detest Gingrich, but now view him as a morally neutral fact of life, like the weather, but political. The weird leitmotif that runs through Gingrich's career is the corruption of books. Newt is book-obsessed; he is constantly assigning reading—Tocqueville and Toffler, Naisbett and Hamilton—to anyone who crosses his path. But books always seem to run him into trouble. It will be recalled that Gingrich first achieved extra-Beltway celebrity in 1987 when he raised a fuss about the arrangements surrounding Speaker Jim Wright's *Reflections of a Public Man*. Gingrich's complaint was that people who wanted to influence Wright were buying the book in bulk as a way of helping him financially. The charge was true. But Gingrich was hip to the deal only because he had worked the same angle himself more than once. In 1977 backers of his political career gave him $13,000 to spend a summer in Europe performing "research" on a futuristic novel. The back-scratch was mutual; the biggest contributor was a real estate developer on whose behalf Newt subsequently intervened. Gingrich set up a similar arrangement for his 1984 work, *Window of Opportunity* (wherein he accused reporters of "being more used to cocaine than computers as an after-dinner topic"). "Investors" kicked in $105,000 for promotion; a chunk went to Gingrich and his wife as a fee for managing the partnership. Since he was elected speaker, Newt's book scams have grown in their ambition. After the election, he immediately tried to cash in his newfound celebrity for its full market value: $4.5 million. Had he gotten away with it, Gingrich would have driven a cement mixer through the very loophole Wright exploited, the one that exempts books from restrictions on outside earnings. But what this deal says about the publishing industry is even less flattering. Newt may be smart, but he has no talent for writing. His first novel was unpublishable; his second, as evidenced by excerpts obtained by Maureen Dowd of *The New York Times*, is sub-Grisham fluff. *Window of Opportunity* was written with the help of a ghostwriter and still reads like a transcript. Yet, to publishers looking for mega-deals, the author's name is all. Republicans, they assume, will buy Newt, just as Catholics bought the pope and dieters bought Oprah. It's meant to be a totem, not literature. Newt has declined the advance in favor of royalties after publication. But mark my words: books will be his undoing.

LAST WEEK I TOOK THE TRAIN UP to New Haven for the funeral of John Boswell, the Medieval historian who died of AIDS on Christmas Eve. He was one of my favorite professors at Yale. Though Boswell wrote several wonderful books, his public recognition is based on the controversy over his final one, *Same-Sex Unions in Premodern Europe*, which documents the existence of a gay marriage ceremony through the Middle Ages. The book's scholarship is as meticulous as Boswell's always was, but so incendiary was the claim that some papers declined to run "Doonesbury" cartoons based on it. Fewer people know that Boswell was a devout Catholic himself, and that he remained one despite what his priest referred to at the Mass as "Jeb's disagreements with the Church and his Church's disagreements with him." It is characteristic of Boswell's argumentative brilliance that he sought tolerance for homosexuals not by decrying the Church's long persecution of them, but by demonstrating that the Church once accepted them. In time, his book will prove enormously influential. One of the things I find most moving is the prospect that when the Vatican someday comes to terms with gay people, the liturgies Boswell disinterred and lovingly translated from the Greek and Old Slavonic will form the basis of a gay marriage ceremony. This will be a fitting memorial to one who was always attuned to the continuities and commonalities of the Middle Ages and our own time. I remember Boswell's famous lecture, "Angels and Atoms," which compared the seemingly absurd beliefs of the Scholastics to our own credence in the theories of particle physics. Boswell's virtuosity and humor were such that students who weren't enrolled in his course would show up to watch him perform. Part of the fascination was that in the early '80s, he was one of the first openly and flamboyantly gay people many college freshmen had ever seen. Indeed, he was part of the reason it was so fashionable to be gay at Yale in those years. A prodigy, a wit, a great scholar and a truly kind man, Boswell was an opener of minds. Newt would have hated him, and he will always be one of my heroes.

JACOB WEISBERG

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ACCORDING TO THE WORLD BANK, SEVERAL HUNDRED MILLION WOMEN AND CHILDREN SPEND THEIR DAYS IN DWELLINGS WHERE WOOD AND COW DUNG ARE BURNED FOR ENERGY. The fumes are indoor air pollutants. Breathing them is like smoking three packs of cigarettes per day. The World Health Organization reports 4 million Third World children die each year from acute respiratory disease, no doubt exacerbated by such fumes.

In the United States the air we breathe is healthier because we use electricity as a primary energy source. The way we deliver electricity is a technological triumph and the envy of the world. Our well-being is the direct result of widespread availability of electricity made cheaply because of wide use of coal.

Given our accomplishments, it would be logical for our national leaders to promote the United States as a model for achieving human well-being and development abroad. But because the radical environmental agenda is set on controlling US energy policy, the reverse is true. In international circles, narrowly focused environmentalists and our own Department of State encourage lesser-developed nations to single-mindedly pursue conservation and distributed renewable generation technologies. At present, these technologies are inefficient and expensive.

REPEAL RIO

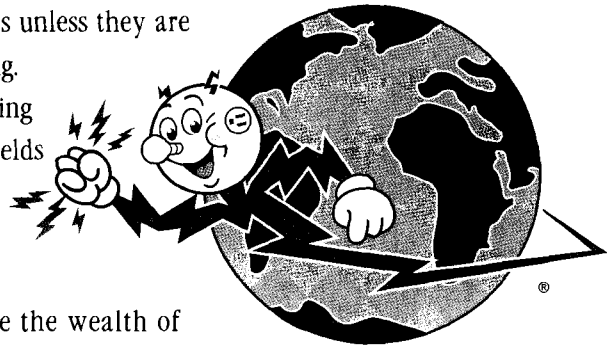
Electrify the World

Policymakers resist urging Third World electrification using our advanced technologies for large-scale, efficient, and economical central station electric generating units that are fossil-fueled.

The justification for this kind of thinking is the Rio Treaty with its focus on limiting carbon dioxide emissions—and as signed in 1992 by former President George Bush with the advice and consent of the US Senate. Should the Rio Treaty be turned into the world's energy law? The answer is "no."

Rio is premised on a one hundred year old theory that catastrophic global warming will result from burning fossil fuels because they emit CO_2, a greenhouse gas. This controversial theory has no support in observations. In the intervening century, climate observations suggest the theory should be discarded, not used as a pretext to curtail industrial activity.

Predictions of future climate conditions generated by general circulation computer models are what the environmental community relies on in defense of *Rio*. But these models are intentionally manipulated so that they predict apocalypse. Existing models cannot replicate actual climate conditions unless they are manipulated. As a result, they fail the first test of computer modelling.



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Earth's climate *is* changing—gradually. Winter nights are warming and summer days appear to be cooling, promoting greater crop yields and more robust forests. CO_2 fertilization of the atmosphere helps produce more food for people and wildlife. Wildlife can flourish in more abundant habitat.

Women and children in the Third World are not at risk because the wealth of industrialized nations results in CO_2 emissions. Their lives are at risk because their present way of life pollutes their environment. Electrification provides a cure for pollution. But the Third World can never realize the benefits of electrotechnologies so long as energy policy is shaped by limited environmental understanding.

Extending electric service to villages can have a powerful impact. It would free Third World populations from drudgery, greatly improving their living standards and, therefore, their quality of life. In this way, repealing *Rio* would be positive for humanity. **Let's electrify the world with our technology and know-how.**

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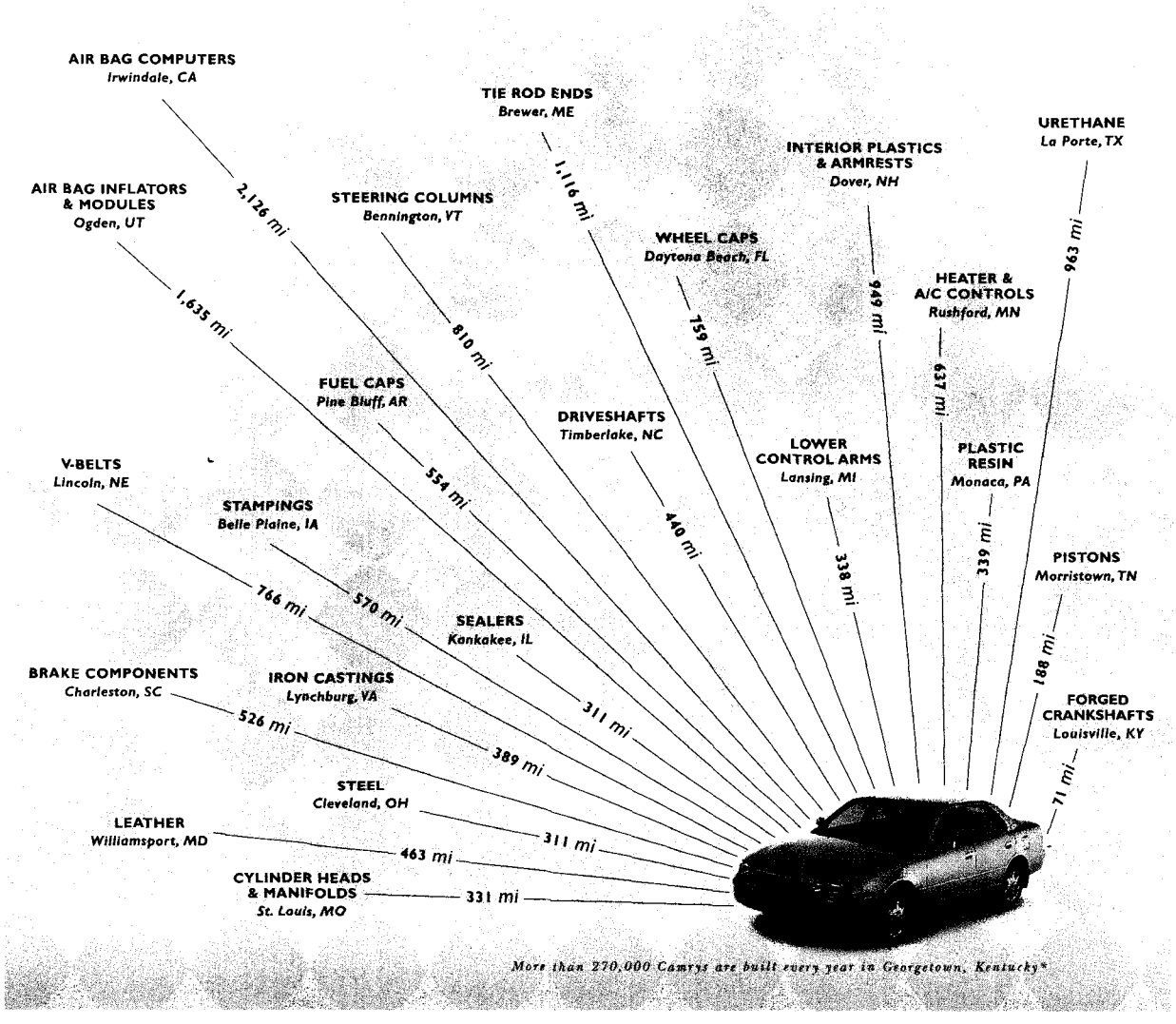

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